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# JOHNSON

LIVES OF DRYDEN AND POPE

Oxford

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE years of Samuel Johnson's life were momentous years in the history of England. Born in 1709, a few days after the victory of Malplaquet had been won by England's greatest general, the sounds that surrounded his cradle were of political rejoicing. But even now Marlborough's influence was on the wane, and the earliest talk that Johnson could understand at all must have been of the abandonment by the Treaty of Utrecht of England's main purpose in the war—the exclusion of the Bourbons from the throne of Spain. And before his eyes were finally closed in 1784 the Independence of America had been acknowledged. Nor were the changes less in domestic history. His father, he tells us<sup>1</sup>, would talk with him about Sacheverell's trial, which led to the overthrow of the Whigs under Anne ; whilst Johnson himself lived to see the premiership of the younger Pitt. Such years could not be otherwise than years of vast intensity of national life, and, for good or evil, that intensity has left its mark in a most striking degree upon the products of the time. It was a period when men worked hard, talked hard, swore hard, drank hard, and generally lived hard. At such a time no man must come to the front whose hands cannot keep his head. The intellectual contests were of the roughest, and epithets could be freely bandied about which are no longer to be heard in polite society. It was then correct and natural in the eyes of men to *hate* a political opponent :—Johnson loved 'a good hater.' A more refined intellect was in some danger of not having strength enough for the time ; of being trampled on, as Johnson trampled upon Gray. Such a social atmosphere was clearly suited to the survival only of the intellectually fittest, and Johnson was in this sense eminently fit. Thus whilst great men—some of England's greatest—were at work to make the

<sup>1</sup> p. 34

time, it is also in a peculiar sense true of that century, that the time was making the men. Throughout Johnson's life gigantic forces were everywhere being stored up, the explosion of which he did not always live to see. He did not live to see the pent-up force of long-endured misery break out in France in the crash of the Revolution, and tear the Bastile stone from stone. But the misery was there, in his day, and some shadow of it even brooded over England. Things were going not right, but wrong, 'dans ce meilleur des mondes possible,' as Voltaire called it in a bitter jest. And Johnson was observer enough to know this well; and had besides enough to remind him of it in his own life-history. The Rasselas of Johnson and the Candide of Voltaire were thus alike in being simply expressions of the age in which the writers lived, of the side of that age which they both saw most clearly, and of a remonstrance against the prevailing optimism which was rendering men far too blind to the wrongness of things around them. The line of demarcation between Faith and Fatalism is ever apt to become vague and shadowy to a feeble intellect or a feeble courage; but Johnson's was a nature, rugged it is true, but essentially strong. Of all bold thinkers he is perhaps the boldest who ventures to attack optimism in a religious age; but Johnson's character was morally and intellectually bold in the extreme. The high courage, which not only gave him his eminence in after years, but which aided him in his daily struggle for bread, against the odds that overwhelmed so many of his contemporaries, enabled him to look life full in the face, and say what he saw there of sorrow and of sin. This peculiar quality of abnormal courage, both physical and intellectual, is very characteristic of times of unusual mental excitement. It nerved the leaders of the Reformation to utterance, totally reckless of their personal safety: it followed their supporters to the stake, and amazed men with the spectacle of heretics triumphant over death in his most awful forms. It gave Burke the power to perform the last feat of oratorical endurance, and pour forth floods of eloquence that shall never die, to the empty benches of an unheeding House. Courage was the key to Johnson's character. Even his fear of death, about which we hear so much, may be to a certain extent misunderstood and exaggerated, unless the student is cautious to make due

allowance for the fact that Johnson had no fear of expressing to the full what fear he felt. When he said that a man who claimed not to fear death must be either an idiot or a liar, he after all only gave utterance to a simple truism in its extreme form. And we are told that when his time came he met the inevitable 'like a man.' It seems not unreasonable to suppose that the prominence given in his conversation to his love of living as such, was due at least as much to his fearing men less, as to his fearing death more, than falls to the lot of ordinary minds. Allowances of this kind must be made even whilst acknowledging to the full the unhappy influence over Johnson's mind of physical disease and inherited mental derangement.

In this main characteristic Johnson was the man of his time. When he first appeared before the public Pope was still writing satires, and to differ in party politics from Pope was like riding a tilt at Launcelot—apt to be rough work. For rough work then he must be formed who was to succeed in England at a season such as this, and Johnson, in spite of a wonderful depth of hidden tenderness which never left him, had nothing to fear in roughness from any adversary. And in his career too he was at once a type of a class and the noblest exception to the ordinary fate of that class. Johnson's life really begins where we find him a hack writer :—a citizen of the Grub Street republic was to become dictator in the world of literature. Thus as a man, as a politician, as a writer, Johnson stands out as the concrete form of the English eighteenth century ; and it is indeed fortunate that we are enabled to study a figure so conspicuous as delineated by the masterly hand of Boswell in the greatest of biographies. For to know Johnson aright, and through him to know the times he lived in, it is not enough to study his writings ; we must know him as a talker, and follow him from one place of meeting to another, where he was wont to sit and hold forth to a circle of admiring listeners, whose few observations, intended mostly to draw him out, he descended to approve or peremptorily censured. Still more we must know those facts of his history which left on him, and on all he did, so deep an impression—an impression which he never wholly shook off, in spite of the iron will he brought to bear on all mere 'circumstances.'

Johnson's father was a bookseller at Lichfield in Staffordshire; 'an old bookseller,' Johnson himself calls him in the *Life of Dryden*<sup>1</sup>. The simple physical presence of many books in the home of childhood often does much towards inclining a man in after years for scholarly pursuits. Books were the toys of Johnson's infancy, the familiar companions of his earliest youth; he searched amongst folios for suspected treasures of hidden apples; and to a childhood spent amongst the stores of the 'old bookseller,' or second-hand bookseller, as we should now call him, he undoubtedly owed much of that acquaintance with rare and curious works which so distinguished him in after-life. 'Why, Sir,' said he to his friend Langton, 'who is there in this town who knows anything of Clenardus but you and I?'<sup>2</sup> For his father he seems to have retained throughout his life a fond and respectful affection; and it is narrated how Johnson never forgot or forgave himself for what he described as 'this only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father,' in refusing to take his place at the book-stall at Uttoxeter on market-day. Fifty years after, the Doctor, now rapidly declining in health and strength, endeavoured to atone for this boyish fault by standing bareheaded in the market-place of Uttoxeter, 'exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather.' From his father Johnson doubtless obtained much information which was afterwards put to good account in his writings, and it is noticeable that in his *Lives of the Poets* his father is one of very few authorities to whom he refers by name. Johnson himself claimed that at eighteen, when the two years since he left school had been spent at home, he knew as much as he did at the age of fifty-three. An unusual memory enabled him to retain most of what he read, and in the pursuit of knowledge he had no choice. Not merely the facts, but what was more momentous for him, the method of acquiring facts, was firmly rooted in him within those two years. Within that space of time he had probably made the acquaintance, in some sort, of most of the books in his father's shop; and the stock must have been small indeed for this not to be a gigantic task. But for work of this kind he had a special aptitude. A fine instinct enabled him to get at the pith of a book with the minimum

<sup>1</sup> p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Boswell, Anno 1780.

expenditure of time ; he is described as ‘tearing the hearts out of them,’ and for this to be done successfully the mental effort must be the greater the shorter the time occupied. ‘To spend too much time in studies is sloth,’ wrote Lord Bacon ; ‘Pray Sir, do *you* read books through?’ said Johnson ;—and a comparison of the two sayings is instructive. But he who would travel express along the road to knowledge must pay the express fare ; and Johnson paid it in the severe reaction which follows upon periods of the intensest intellectual activity. His memory was an excellent servant to him, and he trusted it even too implicitly, quoting always without referring, and therefore rarely quoting with absolute correctness. What his energy of mind enabled him to remember, he wrote ; what he had forgotten, his sluggishness of body made him content to leave unwritten. Hence we value his writings on other grounds than as accurate expositions of intricate matters of fact. ‘To adjust the minute events of literary history,’ he says, ‘is tedious and troublesome<sup>1</sup>’.

In 1728 Johnson matriculated at Pembroke College, Oxford. At this time learning in England was at its very lowest ebb, and even Oxford had then no name to place beside Johnson’s in after celebrity ; with, perhaps, the single exception of John Wesley, who was a Fellow of Lincoln at the time when Johnson was an undergraduate at Pembroke. Much ingenuity has been exercised in determining the dates and duration of Johnson’s stay in Oxford. It is enough to say here that it was short, and that, though Johnson always retained an affection for his university, it is only too clear that he owed none of his eminence to her. Scholarship and poverty form a bitter compound to live on anywhere, and bitterest of all in Oxford. He insulted all his tutors, whom he doubtless even then surpassed in learning, and hurled out of the window the pair of new boots which some friendly hand had laid at his door. For the only lectures he valued were those of a Mr. Bateman, delivered in Christ Church : these he had attended whilst his shoes held out ; but when his toes peeped through he came no more. The poverty which leaves the body unfed Johnson knew well, and could speak of with a ready jest ; but the hunger of the spirit prowling outside the gates of Christ Church, where the feast of reason was spread

<sup>1</sup> p. 31.

within, must have been hard indeed to bear, and certainly deepened the shadow that clouded that fine intellect. There is no relief to the gloom of his own account of this part of his early trials. ‘Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. *I was miserably poor.*’ From Oxford Johnson brought away with him much of the materials of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and it was in no fit of speculative passion, but from hard experience that he wrote—

‘Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,  
And pause awhile from learning, to be wise;  
There mark what ills the scholar’s life assail,  
Toil, envy, want, the garret, and the jail<sup>1</sup>.’

Leaving Oxford, Johnson found himself turned loose upon the world. From his father, who had died in the meantime, he had but twenty guineas as sole fortune, of which he felt himself in duty bound to put aside eleven, as a provision against the death of his mother, whom he fondly loved, that he might not be without the means of providing for her funeral: thus depriving himself of necessaries to lay by for the pecuniary accompaniments of a deep sorrow. He tried to obtain a living as an usher in a school, an occupation for which he was totally unfit, and which accordingly resulted in such ‘complicated misery’ that even Johnson’s courage could not long endure it. He therefore, with a decreased store of money and a much increased melancholy, came to Birmingham in 1733. Here he lived awhile as the guest of his old school-fellow Hector, and here he published his translation of the work from which he afterwards drew the idea of his *Rasselas*—Father Lobo’s *Voyage to Abyssinia*. In this translation but little of Johnson’s own style appears, though it is clearly visible in the preface. Lobo was a Portuguese Jesuit, who started as a missionary to Abyssinia in 1622, and who, having conquered all difficulties and made his way thither, proceeds to give an account of it, together with his own ideas on many matters of interest in connection with the country, and in particular as to the sources of the Nile and the reason of its floods. A tale is told of Johnson, when engaged on this work, which is very characteristic, and which proves how completely fixed his habits, both

<sup>1</sup> *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1st ed., l. 157.

of body and mind, had become, even at that comparatively early date. Johnson lingered over the task till Mr. Hector pointed out to him that through his dilatoriness, the printer who was setting it up was losing work. To approach Johnson through his benevolence was generally to succeed. In this case, though really indisposed, he lay in bed dictating to Hector, and finished the work as quickly as possible. We trace in this anecdote the same characteristics that accompanied him through life, and of which he was himself painfully aware. There is a full confession of his faults in this respect in his own account of the *Lives of the Poets*. ‘Some time in March I finished the *Lives of the Poets*, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.’

For this translation he received five guineas. Such work for such pay could not support him, and we soon find him making the last effort at earning a living in the provinces, preparatory to the great plunge into London which such a man was sure sooner or later to make. Johnson returned to Lichfield, and in 1735 married the widow of a mercer named Porter, a lady twenty years his senior, fat, florid, and affected, but withal of sense and judgment. Upon Johnson’s declaration, ‘Sir, it was a love match on both sides,’ subsequent writers have exhausted much small wit; as if they held that intensity of love could be a monopoly of graceful limbs and regular features. Certain it is that Johnson remembered his wife with undying affection through a widowhood of thirty years.

With his wife he obtained a little fortune of £800, and set up a school at Edial near Lichfield. The school failed, though Johnson obtained one celebrated pupil in David Garrick; and once more he had the world before him.

It was not a bright world for him to enter upon. Times were almost at their very worst for professional writers. Pope, to whom, as to so many successful men, poverty was necessarily disreputable, and ill-success a crime, has given us, in more than one of his satires, pictures, drawn with only too cruel accuracy, of the lives of literary men. To go to bed supperless is bad enough; but it is worse to be supperless and have no bed to go to, to wander hungry through the streets all night, with nothing to keep one warm but talk on politics with some equally destitute

companion. Such however was then the fate of many a man who was dependent on his writings for a livelihood. Such was the fate which Johnson knowingly faced when he left Lichfield and took the road to London, with Garrick for his companion, and an unfinished tragedy for all his capital. Such too was the fate he was to meet during the first few hard years of struggle in London. Of these years we know but few details ; Johnson himself once tried, long after he was beyond the reach of want, to narrate this portion of his own history ; but the large heart was too full, and a sudden flood of tears forced him to leave the tale untold. Some few things we know, and some more we can infer. We know that he signed a letter 'Tuus impransus,' and we conclude that when he could not earn, he would not eat. We know that sometimes, when in want of a lodging, he would walk the streets all night with his friend Savage, and a smile struggles through our sadness when we hear of this ill-fed, ill-clad, houseless pair, declaiming through the night against Walpole, and swearing to stand by the country. The resolution was not so absurd as it seems. Walpole had expended over fifty thousand pounds in ten years in the hire of mercenary pens, and Johnson could doubtless have had no inconsiderable share of this spoil if he would have consented to sell his genius. It is perhaps more than doubtful whether Walpole ever expressly declared his belief that every man had his price, but it is tolerably certain that he found a price for many men. Yet he never found the sum at which he could purchase false allegiance from Samuel Johnson, though such price would have saved him from actual starvation.

In accounting for many of the phenomena observable in Johnson's later career, it would seem that far too much stress had been laid on his hereditary disorders of body and mind, as compared with the little account taken of what may be called the Grub Street years of his existence. Because details of this period are almost wholly wanting, there has been a tendency to pass it over almost in silence. There can hardly be a greater error. To the reader of Rasselas there is a vast significance in the fact that Johnson, who was willing to talk of anything but of his prospects in another world, broke down when he tried to narrate the sufferings of this time. When we hear of his unpleasant habit of voracious eating, we are too

apt to forget that he thereby disgusted those who had not, like himself, felt the real pangs of hunger. When in Rasselas and the Vanity of Human Wishes he pours out his tale of the broken idols of humanity, we must remember that whilst literary knaves and fools—Arnalls and Ralphs *et hoc genus omne*—were growing fat on bribery, and cultureless cunning was ruling the kingdom, Samuel Johnson was tramping the streets at night, with the wind creeping through his coat and the water through his boots.

Nor were the manners of the time at all inclined towards a gentle consideration of 'worth by poverty depressed.' It was hardly more than a generation since the poetry of Dryden had been paid for by the booksellers by bulk alone. (Cf. note, p. 291.) Johnson himself allows<sup>1</sup> that since that time the general conduct of traders had improved. But even yet the manners of the men who had the money towards those who had the brains, bore few traces of softening culture. We have an amusing instance of this in the fact that Osborne, by whom Johnson had been employed in cataloguing the Harleian Library, presumed too far on the young writer's poverty, and having addressed him in insolent terms, was promptly knocked down with a folio.

Such was literary London when Johnson entered it in 1737. The next year he became connected with the Gentleman's Magazine, and this periodical was for some time his chief support. Parliamentary debates were not then regularly reported, and Johnson wrote for this magazine, under the title 'The Senate of Lilliput,' speeches which appeared to be actual reports. The substance was brought to him by persons who had attended the debates, and he composed the speeches for both sides. 'I saved appearances tolerably well,' he said, when applauded for his impartiality, 'but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it.' This scheme Johnson abandoned when he found that people were really deceived by it, and were taking the speeches to be genuine. In this same year (1738) appeared his poem 'London,' in imitation of Juvenal's Third Satire. This poem was purchased by Dodsley for ten guineas, got into a second edition in a week, and made Johnson at once famous. From this poem, however, though Johnson was compelled, by the fact of imitating

<sup>1</sup> p. 58.

Juvenal's great satire upon Rome, to aim most of his shafts at the *city*, as distinguished from the country, it must not be supposed that in this particular he was expressing his real sentiments. The poem is simply a vent for his hatred of the Whigs, and for his own gloomy fortune. This last, though its expression never falls beneath the dignity of general complaint, and has no personal references to himself, is conveyed bitterly enough :—

“ Since worth,” he cries, “ in these degenerate days,  
Wants ev'n the cheap reward of empty praise ;  
In those curst walls, devote to vice and gain,  
Since unrewarded science toils in vain ;  
Since hope but soothes to double my distress,  
And every moment leaves my little less ;  
While yet my steady steps no staff sustains,  
And life still vigorous revels in my veins ;  
Grant me, kind Heaven, to find some happier place,  
Where honesty and sense are no disgrace.”

And again, in closer reference to his own lot :—

‘ This mournful truth is everywhere confess'd,  
SLOW RISES WORTH BY POVERTY DEPRESS'D.’

Ten years later, in 1749, appeared his other great poem, also an imitation of Juvenal, under the title, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* ; and we can again trace the deepening gloom of the author's mind by the tones in which he sings the ever-old ever-new strain, *Vanitas Vanitatum*. This is the poem of which the *Rasselas* may be truly described as a prose version. The ten years intervening between its publication and that of ‘ *London*,’ had found Johnson just able to keep the wolf from the door ; probably, thanks to his connection with the Gentleman's Magazine, beyond actual want so long as his health and strength enabled him to be ceaselessly at work, but never able to enjoy that boon so precious to a man of his temperament, an *untaxed* holiday. Johnson loved leisure, but rest meant the loss of money which he could not afford to do without. Johnson was not exactly a pessimist in the ordinary sense of the term. Life had been a very hard thing to him, and he declared its hardness with perfect fearlessness of the consequences of his reasoning. In fact he did not see what those consequences were. He drew no

conclusions as to the general government of the world from the wry aspect of life which was presented to himself, and he sees no inconsistency between his general invective in this poem against the hollowness of all ambitions and the faithlessness of all human joys, and his concluding exhortation :—

‘ Still raise for good the supplicating voice,  
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice.

• • •  
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,  
Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.’

The singularity of this intellectual position, and its wide difference from that of Voltaire, have been more fully considered elsewhere, *à propos* of Rasselas. But it is well to note here again how external circumstances act on a man like Johnson. Though his troubles have left their mark deep graven upon all his work, his indomitable will never fails him. Though his poetry was written ‘at a white heat,’ and passion lends his tones their depth, Johnson never stoops to shriek. What his sorrows have taught him to feel, he writes, and manfully writes his best, snatching a scanty pittance from the lap of Necessity herself: since he must suffer, he will make his suffering pay his way, and taking fifteen guineas for his ‘Vanity of Human Wishes,’ coin his heart’s blood into cash, and live, ever so little while, upon the proceeds.

The next year (1750) brought another and more profitable scheme. The Rambler appeared twice a week from March 1750 to March 1752. From this date Johnson begins to enter upon brighter pecuniary prospects; and the Rambler, which brought him four guineas a week, brought him also, what he probably valued far more, congenial friendships. This undertaking was suddenly terminated by the death of Mrs. Johnson. The letter in which Johnson announced his loss to his friend Dr. Taylor, was afterwards described by the latter as expressing grief in the strongest manner he had ever read. Happily for the sanctity of the deepest recesses of human feeling, that letter is lost. But the wound thus inflicted never healed, and Johnson wrote, in solemn remembrance of his wife, some words which have been preserved, and which, dated on the thirtieth anniversary of her loss, show that his affection for

her had never abated by length of separation and the rapid approach of his own end.

Meantime Johnson had issued proposals for that work by which his name was afterwards to be best known. As early as 1749, two years, that is to say, before the production and failure of his tragedy of Irene, he had planned an English Dictionary. The plan was published and addressed to Lord Chesterfield. And this work was carried on by Johnson with greater energy and persistency than any of his other undertakings. For seven years it occupied most of his thoughts and his time. His own view of the years thus spent we may gather from the book itself. The letter L is near the middle of the alphabet ; Johnson therefore was about half-way through his task when he came to the word 'Lexicographer,' and defined it as 'a harmless drudge.' The book was at last published in 1755, and with it came the death-blow to patronage in literature. For Chesterfield wrote some recommendations of the work in the *World* newspaper, doubtless intended as a trap to catch a dedication. Johnson, however, had been, or conceived himself to have been, neglected by Chesterfield during the time the work was in hand, and was in no mood to be so caught. Besides, the two were naturally antipathetic. Johnson could have little in common with the man who published 'Letters to his Son,' containing minute directions as to how he ought to proceed who would blow his nose in company. So instead of a dedication Lord Chesterfield got the letter given below, one of the finest, if not the very finest, of the specimens of indignant epistolary composition which our language contains :—

' February 7, 1755.

' MY LORD,—I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the *World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

' When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre* ;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending ; but I found my attendance so little

encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

‘Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

‘The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

‘Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached the ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

‘Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

‘MY LORD,

‘Your lordship’s most humble, most obedient servant,

‘SAM. JOHNSON.’

The publication of the Dictionary gave Johnson at once the first place among the literary men of his day. He was henceforth to hold a position vacant since he left it. He became a kind of literary oracle. There were not wanting, even in his own day, many who held that the position was a false one; that the realm was too wide for one man’s rule; and this opinion receives sanction from the fact that no man has been able to succeed to Johnson’s place. For the time being, however, he was supreme, and his supremacy was maintained till death.

His pecuniary troubles, however, had not yet come to an end, since he had drawn from the booksellers, during the progress of the work, more than the total sum which he was to receive for his dictionary. He was therefore again compelled to write for money,—the only motive, he used to say, for which anybody but a blockhead ever wrote anything. For two years (1758—1760) he brought out the periodical called *The Idler*, but this did not suffice even for his very modest wants, and in 1759 he was compelled to find some special means of meeting the expenses consequent upon his mother's death. This difficulty was met by the composition of the story of *Rasselas*.

The materials of this work were not new to Johnson. His translation of Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia* supplied him with the scene, and his own leading current of thought, as formerly expressed in the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, was ready to come again to the surface, and form the motive of the plot. *Rasselas* was written in the evenings of a single week, sent to press as fast as it was written, and never again read over for correction. For this work he received £100, and £25 more for a second edition.

But the hard times in Johnson's life were now approaching their close. Soon after the accession of George III, that is to say in 1762, in the ministry of Lord Bute, it was decided to award to Johnson a pension of £300 a year, in consideration of his distinguished services to literature. It is no small testimony to Johnson's independence of spirit that is recorded in the fact that there was much difficulty in finding any one who would undertake to inform him of his good fortune. It was in truth a dangerous errand ; the same hand that had flung the new boots out of the window at Oxford, might possibly do as much in London for the messenger of Lord Bute. Contrary to expectation, however, the proposal was favourably received, and Johnson was thus placed beyond the reach of want. To induce him to accept a benefit which most men would have made considerable concessions to procure, it was expressly stated to him that it was not given with any idea that he should ever 'dip his pen in faction'; it was an acknowledgment, as Lord Bute told him, not of anything he was to do, but of what he had done. Perhaps his lordship guessed that this would be the best means for securing Johnson's aid if it was wanted ; and in fact

he did afterwards write some few political articles in support of the policy of George III.

Into the remaining events of Johnson's life it will not be necessary to enter here in any detail. He was now at liberty for rest and conversation, and began to mix much more than formerly in the best society. Under such influences his manners softened considerably, nor did his real tenderness of heart abate. It is said that of his pension he only spent some £70 or £80 per annum on himself, the remainder being devoted to some form of charity. It would perhaps have produced much astonishment in the minds of some of his acquaintance if they could have followed the Doctor home after some conversational meeting prolonged far into the night, and watched the ferocious disputant of an hour ago, searching deep doorways for sleeping 'street arabs,' into whose little fingers he would slip pennies, that they might wake and find a breakfast, heaven-sent.

In 1777 Johnson was engaged to write what he himself described<sup>1</sup> as 'Little Lives and little Prefaces to a little Edition of the English Poets.' The occasion of this work was the publication by the Martins at Edinburgh of a very faulty edition of the English Poets, which was both deficient and incorrect. Hereupon the London booksellers met and resolved to unite in bringing out an elegant and correct edition. Doctor Johnson was requested to write concise accounts of the lives of the various poets whose works were to be included in the edition, and the terms being left to his own decision, he named two hundred guineas, which, as might be expected from the moderation of the demand, was at once agreed to. This work occupied him till 1781, and swelled into dimensions which Johnson had never contemplated. Johnson, though he regarded all work as a task, and had a greater or less dislike for exertion of every kind, seems to have regarded this work with peculiar favour. We are informed that it was on his request and recommendation that the works of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden were added to the collection. It was a work for which Johnson was peculiarly fitted. Perhaps no man, certainly no practised writer, of his day, could cope with him in the extent and accuracy of his knowledge of the English literature of his own century and the preceding one. These Lives first came out,

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Boswell, May 3, 1777.

in accordance with the original plan, as préfaces in the volumes which contained the poems. The first four volumes were published in 1779, and the rest in 1780. The first edition of the Lives, which was published separately, came out in 1781.

Johnson was now rapidly approaching the close of his life. In 1783 appeared the second edition of his Lives of the Poets, with some few hasty and imperfect corrections, and this was his last work of any importance.

In December 1784 he died. The one fear he had even to the last was of loss of reason. Having been informed of his condition by his friend Dr. Brocklesby, he resolved to take no more physic, not even opiates to allay his pain, 'for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded.' He had his wish, his mind remaining vigorous to the last. There was now no more fear of death; 'no man could appear more collected, more devout, or less terrified at the thoughts of the approaching minute.' His breathing, which had been for some time difficult, quietly ceased at seven in the evening of December 13, 1784:—

'So passed the strong heroic soul away.'

He was buried in Westminster Abbey, thus fulfilling an ancient prophecy of his, expressed to his friend Goldsmith, by his quoting, one day when they visited the Abbey together, Juvenal's line—

'Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis.'

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Johnson's position as a classic would be assured him by his criticism alone, if other claims were wanting. His Lives of the Poets are rather critiques than biographies, and in this respect they stand almost by themselves in the contemporary literature. Criticism before Johnson's time was an almost unknown art. Dryden, it is true, had led the way, and had given, in various introductions to plays, and self-laudatory dedications, canons of criticism which had at least the merit of being sound as far as they went. But Dryden in his own day had few imitators, and what was then known as criticism was a counterfeit unworthy of the name, consisting only of unqualified laudation

or scurrilous abuse. Pope met with little better treatment at the hands of the critics of his day. Warburton, who defended his *Essay on Man*, found therein a defence of orthodoxy which existed only in the inner consciousness of the critic, and at the discovery of which no one seems to have been more surprised than Pope himself, though he gladly adopted what was thus fathered upon him. But criticism as an art, proceeding by the impartial application of rules, was in its earliest infancy in England when it received from the hand of Johnson a development it has never since lost, and which has since his time advanced comparatively little. It will be worth while to note briefly those qualities in Johnson which enabled him to do this; which constituted him, in chronology as in merit, one of the very first of English critics.

In the first place was his love of truth and strong sense of justice. Though this was sometimes obscured, as in his *Life of Milton*, by the force of his political prejudices, it is never deliberately sacrificed to effect. There are many instances of this to be found in the two lives contained in this volume; perhaps none stronger than his plea for the probable sincerity of Dryden's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith<sup>1</sup>. Next to this was his wide knowledge. Criticism being a matter of comparison, a man must be acquainted with many authors to judge well of any. And in this Johnson had no rival amongst the writers of his day. Knowledge so superior naturally begets self-confidence, also an indispensable qualification in a critic, though one which was somewhat in excess in Johnson, and gave now and then to his critical remarks a too harshly oracular tone. Byron's satire against critical writers in general—

‘A man must serve his time to every trade  
Save censure, critics all are ready-made,’<sup>2</sup>

certainly did not in any sense apply to Johnson. He had served his time pretty completely when he first wrote as a critic, and no man was ever better qualified for a trade, so far as length of preparation is concerned.

From the general tone of his criticism we may gather that the prevailing quality of his mind was a keen common sense. This is a quality the possession of which in any great degree is

<sup>1</sup> pp. 37 and 48.

<sup>2</sup> *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, I. 63.

attended with striking advantages as well as some peculiar dangers. Though Johnson was not unskilled in metaphysical literature, he was quite unable to appreciate the higher efforts of metaphysical thought. The man who considered he had refuted Berkeley's idealism by knocking his stick against the ground, proved nothing but his own incapacity to apprehend the question at issue. But this very incapacity was useful to a critic of that particular age. Johnson had all the characteristically English dislike of anything that seemed 'too clever by half,' the homely phrase in which the average Englishman is accustomed to define the limits of his own intelligence whilst believing himself to be gauging the intellects of others. Hence he was enabled to see more clearly than any one before him what were the exact failures of the so-called Metaphysical Poets. 'Their thoughts,' he says, 'are often new but seldom natural, they are not obvious but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering how he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of ingenuity they were ever found.'<sup>1</sup> This vicious style had been left behind for ever by the practice of Dryden and Pope, and here was added to the force of their example the authoritative fiat of a skilled criticism. Johnson had hoped by his Dictionary to give stability to the English language, and in this he failed, as it was inevitable he should. But his criticism undoubtedly did much to fix the opinion of the English reading public in favour of nature and common sense in writing;—a far more valuable service.

It will be well to examine the two Lives contained in this volume, with a view to extracting from them and estimating the canons of criticism they contain. We are able to begin quite at the beginning in considering the general subject of criticism; and to the first and most essential question, as to who is rightly constituted a critic, we find at least a partial answer in the statement that Dryden 'proves his right of judgment by his power of performance' (p. 62). Johnson might naturally incline to this view as being so certainly in his own favour; yet it will be easily perceived that it does not express the whole truth, since many men of the most exquisite taste in judging of work have but little original productive power. Another equally fundamental question arises as to the prime essential of a writer; and

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 261.

to this Johnson gives an answer as happily expressed as it is accurate:—‘Knowledge of the subject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect’ (p. 87). There is, it need hardly be said, no necessity to confine this rule to poets only; it is sound and good for all literature; and if it seems a truism to the modern reader, it must be remembered that ‘That which is easy at one time was difficult at another’ (p. 61), and that in Johnson’s day men had not yet been long alive to the necessity of a qualification which seems to us now so obviously indispensable. This is a canon which applies far more to prose than to poetry; for, as Johnson himself was well aware, Pope produced, in his *Essay on Man*, highly polished verses on subjects in the understanding of which he had progressed but little beyond ‘the talk of his mother and his nurse’ (p. 235).

From these preliminary considerations we come naturally to the methodical canons of criticism itself. How are we to judge of an author? To this we can find in these Lives three answers; two of which however are only partial, and serve rather as cautions than as final tests:—‘To judge rightly of an author we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another’ (p. 61). There is here given a most important caution to those especially who would judge of the work of a bygone age. The *process* of thought is ever worth following with reverent care, however much the necessary limitations of its age may have cramped its *results*.

And, secondly, we find ourselves cautioned against *smallness* of criticism. ‘It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and to write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critic may commend’ (p. 97). Though the allusion here is to translations, the rule remains equally valuable for all literature. It was by his own observance of this canon that Johnson was raised so immeasurably above the paltry word-quibbles of the critics who preceded him. It is only necessary to compare

the pettiness and abuse of Clifford and of Settle, quoted in the Life of Dryden (pp. 17, sq.), with the far-reaching generality and breadth of wisdom and of observation in Johnson's own remarks, to note how vast had been the change in little more than a generation.

Valuable as these two cautions are, they do not yet amount to a real test, an actual, tangible phenomenon, by whose presence or absence we may judge for or against an author's claim to a high position. For works of imagination the test is given, but unlike the two preceding rules, it cannot always be applied to literature of every other kind. 'Works of imagination excel by their allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain which the reader throws away. He only is the master who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day' (p. 97). There is here another of those truisms, so difficult to write for the first time, and whose value when once written it is so hard for succeeding generations to appreciate. But its acceptance must be qualified by considerations arising naturally from the first of the cautions above given. In literature as in all else, nothing succeeds like success; but in thus judging of an author we must not forget the times in which he lives, and the possibility of that success being due to adventitious circumstances. With this allowance the test holds good. Thus it is that Johnson calls on us to judge of Pope<sup>1</sup>; thus it is that we may safely judge himself.

It will not, however, be possible always to concur with the canons of criticism laid down by Johnson in this work. Notably we must except that one which concerns the difficulty of the subject-matter of a poetical composition. We can collect his opinion on this head from more than one passage in the present volume. 'Where there is no difficulty there is no praise' (p. 8). 'The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant'<sup>2</sup> (p. 221). And again, complaining

<sup>1</sup> p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the note on this passage.

that Dryden has added a note about *longitude* to one of his poems, he says, 'It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured science into poetry, and have shown, by explaining longitude, that verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy' (p. 81). Now the principles of poetical criticism are here mistaken; difficulty of subject does not add to, but detracts from, the charm of poetry; and however well the difficulty may be surmounted, we are still able to perceive that the charm lies, not in the difficulty, but in the perfection of art which does not allow us to notice that there has been any difficulty to surmount. It is interesting to note, however, that this was rather the popular idea of the time than Johnson's own deliberate opinion. Thus it is contradicted by the whole tone of the special critique of the *Essay on Man* (p. 235), and almost in so many words by the rule about poetical diction:— 'It is a general rule in poetry that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation' (p. 79).

The wide variety and comprehensiveness of Johnson's contributions to the code of criticism can only be perceived by some kind of enumeration. Remarks teeming with literary wisdom are scattered about his pages so profusely that some easily escape any more serious attention than is excited by the passing pleasure of reading them for the first time. Like all true classics Johnson's writing bears the test of the most industrious and ceaseless study. Read as often as you will, when you read again something fresh is found. His writing is in English literature what Bach's work is in music; to work at it is not to tire of it, for such work always brings, to the oldest as to the youngest student, a sensation of ever-growing power. Searching, then, for gems like this, we do not go far before we find an admirable canon of translation in the pithy sentence, 'A translator is to be like his author, it is not his business to excel him.'<sup>1</sup> And though Johnson used to say that none but a blockhead ever wrote for anything but money, he well knew the dangers that beset that road to Fame, and shows what small

<sup>1</sup> p. 70.

chance of excellence there is for an author who is forced to write whenever some event gives him a subject on which he may earn. Dryden's poems were almost all occasional, and 'the occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often, that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet.'<sup>1</sup> In this respect Pope had a great advantage over Dryden, for Pope 'was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.'<sup>2</sup>

The enumeration could be continued at great length. To select a few more:—

At one moment Johnson is laying down a rule as to how illustrations should be worked out, the chief fault to be avoided being a too great likeness between the two things compared<sup>3</sup>; and at another we find him, in his strong love for the new-born regularity of English numbers, lamenting that there is no fixed rule for the introduction of Alexandrine lines<sup>4</sup>. With shrewd penetration we are warned against judging too harshly of the apparent hypocrisy of private letters<sup>5</sup>: and again, with even greater acuteness, against crediting a man's over-earnest or over-frequent protestations of his contempt for anything, for 'no man thinks much of that which he despises.'<sup>6</sup> He gives an admirable exposition of what ought truly to be meant when we speak of an author's *originality*<sup>7</sup>; and concludes his Life of Pope with an eloquent application to the poet's particular case of the rule before laid down that success is its own only test. 'Let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry, let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed.'<sup>8</sup>

It has been already pointed out that the same test may be applied to Johnson himself, and that, when judged by this

<sup>1</sup> p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> p. 208.

<sup>6</sup> p. 210.

<sup>7</sup> p. 227 and note.

<sup>8</sup> p. 240.

principle, there can be no doubt of his position as a classical prose writer. It is unnecessary to enter upon any of those questions which have sometimes to be considered in awarding the title of classic to other writers ; Johnson stands pre-eminent as the representative of the prose of his time, and his pre-eminence has dwarfed his contemporaries, with the single exception of Burke. In one sense it was not so very difficult for him to stand alone. The bad condition into which English learning had fallen has been already noticed ; and Johnson, whose scholarship was rather wide than accurate, found nevertheless few equals in knowledge of the classic languages. To him Latin appeared a necessity, and the genius of the Latin language permeated Johnson's style, contributing to it some of its beauties, many of its faults, and all its peculiarity. During Johnson's long life learning in England began to revive somewhat, a result to which his own influence contributed a large share for any one man. And this dawning of new light for classical scholarship naturally produced a tendency to look down unduly upon the Saxon elements in the language. This was a mistake which was very common in Johnson's day, and from which not even Burke was wholly free. The classical languages have endowed us with precision, but they have not lent us force ; they have given a complexion to the body of our speech, but the bones and sinews are Saxon. And in estimating Johnson's style we shall find its chief fault to be an over-pretentious Latinity. This shows most plainly whenever he has to weave into his web threads drawn from the bundle of old English proverbs. To these he is as ruthless a Vandal as ever destroyed the monuments of a fine antiquity. Thus he makes a maid-servant translate the old English 'What is done cannot be helped,' or 'It is vain crying over spilt milk,' into the Johnsonian 'What cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.'<sup>1</sup> To understand the causes of this peculiarity it must never be forgotten that Johnson's prose was the prose of a transition age. At a time when learning was just emerging from almost total neglect, it was natural that men of culture should make that culture the all-important thing, and allow to drop into the background that to which the culture is applied, the human heart, the human intellect—the *man himself*, in

<sup>1</sup> Rasselas, chap. iv.

short. This is a frame of mind which produces a dissatisfaction with what is familiar, often unjustified by the real qualities of the familiar thing. It is ever the danger of a scholar that he should try to find some better vehicle than his mother tongue for communicating his thoughts to his fellow men. And though he should thus excite the admiration of his less learned contemporaries, his *tours de force* remain as blemishes rather than as beauties in his style, pedantic in his own age and ridiculous in the next. To confuse unfamiliarity with excellence of style was a common enough fault in Johnson's day. To what extent the common language of everyday life was then considered unworthy the use of a man of literature is strikingly shown in the following anecdote from Boswell :—

‘ Talking of the comedy of The Rehearsal he said “It has not wit enough to keep it sweet.” This was easy: he therefore caught himself, and pronounced a more round sentence: “It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.”’<sup>1</sup>

The terse vivacity of the easier form, as Boswell calls it, seems to us now preferable to an almost comical degree to the rounder sentence, which Johnson's scholarly instincts substituted for it, and in admiring which Boswell would doubtless have had the concurrence of most of the cultured men of his day.

But though Johnson's style is open to this censure, it must not be concluded that it is really vicious. ‘ He that writes much will not easily escape a manner,’<sup>2</sup> and Johnson himself came under the operation of this rule. But he knew well the essential constituents of style, as also its ultimate end. That is the best style which best conveys the writer's meaning to the reader's mind; and by this rule Johnson will not be found to fail. Though many sentences are fatiguingly long, very few throughout this volume will be found to be confused. His prose has a certain stately march, and bears his reader along with it :

‘ Strong without rage, without o'erflowing, full.’

The very weightiness of his style was in Johnson's hands a power and not an encumbrance. Few poor men could, without loss of dignity, have so completely repaid with scorn Pope's scorn of poverty. And as an antidote to the jerky style of the modern ephemeral press, the student can have no better regimen

<sup>1</sup> Life, Anno 1784.

<sup>2</sup> p. 67.

than the writings of Samuel Johnson. And in another essential of style he will bear examination, an essential which he himself pointed out in his critique upon Dryden. Johnson cannot be successfully imitated. It has been thought and said that it would be easy to learn to 'write Johnsonian.' The answer to which is that many in his own time tried to write Johnsonian, but had it not been for the industry of Boswell we should never have heard of one of them. Johnson's intellect was strong enough to go forth to war in heavy harness ; he is

‘Astur of the four-fold shield,  
Girt with the brand none else may wield,’

the prose of his imitators produces an intellectual impression akin to the discomfort of the eye in looking at a very small man walking under a very large hat.

Nor does Johnson fail in the great gift of *humour*, the peculiar and precious gift of English literature. This is displayed particularly in *Rasselas*, and is the one point of superiority in that work over Voltaire's *Candide*. And constantly in Johnson's writing the vein of humour crops up in a sentence of apparently the gravest construction, and the reader's pleasure is heightened by his surprise. To his eternal honour be it added that Johnson's humour is never coarse. Ferocious and unscrupulous as Johnson might be in conversation—intellectually—the moral nature is ever pure within, and his mirth is as innocent as a child's. No other hand had strength and delicacy to put in such fine touches with so broad a pen.

It may be well to caution the student once for all against attaching too great a value to these *Lives* as biographies. As narratives of fact they are of very little worth. Johnson was not the man to take minute trouble in investigating into obscure details ; and in fact he accepts with very little examination, or with none, any story that may be current about the original of his portraits. So far as a man can be really judged from his own writings Johnson's *Lives* will be a safe guide to truth. But when his narrative is to be fetched from 'casual mention and uncertain tradition,' Johnson soon gets out of his depth, or rather goes further than his industry will follow him. He had not much talent for estimating probabilities, and readily admits a tale to the disadvantage of any one whom he personally dis-

likes. To say that such mistakes were made in the most perfect good faith, while it excuses the workman from much of the blame, does not render the work any more valuable. The two Lives contained in this volume will be found to contain some very serious errors. Few of the dates are accurately given, and many of the incidents are founded upon mere hearsay evidence, and do not bear a moment's examination. Erroneous as they are, they have been here given as Johnson wrote them, no attempt having been made to tamper with the text of a classic under pretext of emendation. It is believed that all the errors are pointed out in the Notes; it is enough, as an example, to call attention here to the strange story of Dryden's funeral, and the obvious falsehood of the incident about Voltaire, narrated by Pope and handed on by Johnson. As it has been said above, it is not as expositions of fact that these Lives are valuable. Their value lies in the wisdom, the knowledge of men and things, which lies scattered over almost every page, sparkling in shrewd remark and epigram. Caring little for the minutiae of this or that particular existence, Johnson knew the facts of human life in general, and in his Lives of the Poets has written a biography of mankind.

The edition followed in the Lives has been that of 1783, the latest edition in Johnson's lifetime, and one in which he had made a few, a very few, corrections of the inaccuracies of the first edition.

Free use has been made of previous editions of the works of Johnson, Dryden, and Pope. To these, as to other works consulted, I must express my acknowledgments in general terms; their number precluding special mention. I have also most gratefully to acknowledge the invaluable aid and counsel received from the Rev. Mark Pattison, B.D., late Rector of Lincoln College, and other kind assistance received from various quarters, in particular from Professor Henry Morley, who has supplied me with some valuable references.

## DRYDEN.

in the first part where life & art should be delineate,  
especially which the reputation must receive will require  
any more ample than can now be given. His contem-  
plation, however, does reverently his genius, and his  
integrity and character; therefore can be known beyond  
the usual notion of an author's reputation.

## THE LIFE OF DRYDEN.

All these parts are in the best condition but the  
final check of the book will be the second of H. Dryden  
which is to be the last chapter. Dryden is to be  
named after his father in the second edition, and  
will have been used, as he is, as an Antiquary. For  
the first edition he seems to have been used, as he  
and others to have been used, as far back as 1667, when  
the first edition appeared, and in 1670, when  
the second edition was issued, of the first edition, he  
is called an Antiquary, and in the third edition, he  
is called a Dryden, still fully, however, as he is  
and to be the author of the second of his posthumous  
works, which however has not been published. For the first edition, he is called an Antiquary, and in the  
second edition, he is called a Dryden, still fully, as he  
is and to be the author of the second of his posthumous  
works, which however has not been published.



## DRYDEN.

Of the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten; and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

John Dryden was born, August 9, 1631, at Aldwincle, near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden, of Tichmersh, who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Bart., of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire, but the original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a-year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him; or if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the King's scholars by Dr. Busby, whom he long after

continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox, and his poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds and then gems; at last exalts them into stars, and says,—

10                    'No comet need foretell his change drew on,  
Whose corps might seem a constellation.'

At the University he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects or public occasions. He probably considered that he who purposed to be an author, ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the College. Why he was excluded cannot now be known, and it is vain to guess; had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. In the 'Life of 20 Plutarch' he mentions his education in the College with gratitude; but in a prologue at Oxford he has these lines:—

'Oxford to him a dearer name shall be  
Than his own mother-University;  
Thebes did his rude unknowing youth engage;  
He chooses Athens in his riper age.'

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he became a public candidate for fame, by publishing 'Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector,' which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were 30 sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the King was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrists of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published 'Astrea Redux, a poem on the happy restaura-

tion and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.'

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace; if he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year he praised the new king in a second poem on his restoration. In the 'Astrea' was the line,—

• An horrid *stillness* first *invades* the *ear*,  
And in that *silence* we a *tempest* fear;

10

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*; yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation, yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to death a dart and the power of 20 striking?

In settling the order of his works, there is some difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was some years afterwards altered and revived; but since the plays are 30 said to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred; and thus it may be collected that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the stage; com-

elled undoubtedly by necessity, for he appears never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of critics, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

His first piece was a comedy called the 'Wild Gallant.' He began with no happy auguries, for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the critics.

I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatic performances; 20 it will be fit, however, to enumerate them, and to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any peculiarity intrinsic or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight-and-twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he published the 'Rival Ladies,' which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery, a man of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatic rhyme, which he defends in his dedication with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was 30 himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the 'Indian Queen,' a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them wrote are not distinguished.

The 'Indian Emperor' was published in 1667. It is a

tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's 'Indian Queen.' Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the doors; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in 'The Rehearsal,' when Bayes tells how many reams he has printed to instil into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night, which Rymer has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems, by the Earl of Orrery, <sup>10</sup> in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote, only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatic rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the 'Duke of Lerma,' in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667 he published 'Annus Mirabilis,' the 'Year of Wonders,' which may be esteemed one of his most elaborate works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication; and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of <sup>30</sup> conscious genius by recommending his own performance:— 'I am satisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] are incomparably the best subjects I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I have

performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution.'

It is written in quatrains, or heroic stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the 'Gondibert' of Davenant, and which he then thought the most majestic that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, increased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very 10 much his custom to recommend his works, by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other something that is not now easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the Earl of Orrery, had defended dramatic rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his 'Dialogue on Dramatic 20 Poetry;' Howard, in his preface to the 'Duke of Lerma,' animadverted on the vindication; and Dryden, in a preface to the 'Indian Emperor,' replied to the animadversions with great asperity, and almost with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the 'Annus Mirabilis' was published. Here appears a strange inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the 'Duke of Lerma' did not appear till 1668, the same year in 30 which the Dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureate. The salary

of the Laureate had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from a hundred marks to one hundred pounds a-year and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The same year he published his 'Essay on Dramatic Poetry,' an elegant and instructive dialogue, in which we are told by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the Duke of Dorset. This work seems to have given Addison a model for his 'Dialogues upon Medals.'

'Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen,' is a tragi-comedy. In 10 the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions: and determines very justly, that of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed, that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

'Sir Martin Mar-all' is a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the 20 author. Langbaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

The 'Tempest' is an alteration of Shakspeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, 'whom,' says he, 'I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising; and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least 30 happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other, and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man.'

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare's monster Caliban is added a sister-monster Sycorax; and a woman who, in the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the 'Empress of Morocco,' a tragedy written in rhyme by Elkanah Settle, which was so much applauded as to make him think his <sup>10</sup> supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at White-hall by the Court ladies.

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

<sup>20</sup> Of Settle he gives this character: 'He is an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be <sup>30</sup> able to express anything either naturally or justly!'

This is not very decent, yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails most over brutal fury. He proceeds: 'He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His

King, his two Empresses, his villain, and his sub-villain, nay his hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the Elkanah will be visible.'

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, 'To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet,—

10

"To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,  
Which back'd with thunder do but gild a storm."

*Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning: lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must gild a storm. Now if I must conform my smiles to lightning, then my smiles must gild a storm too: to gild with smiles is a new invention of gilding. And gild a storm by being backed with thunder.* Thunder is part of the storm, so one part of the storm must help to gild another part, and help by *backing*; as if a man would gild a thing the better for being backed, or having a load upon his back. So that here is *gilding by conforming, smiling, lightning, backing, and thundering*. The whole is as if I should say thus, I will make my counterfeit smiles look like a flattering stone horse, which, being backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle. I am mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once.'

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen; but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify curiosity 30 to quote it more largely:—

10

"Whene'er she bleeds,  
He no severer a damnation needs,  
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,  
Than the infection that attends that breath."

‘That attends that breath.—The poet is at *breath* again; *breath* can never ‘scape him; and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*; that is, she must be executed first, and sentenced after; and the *pronouncing* of this *sentence* will be *infectious*; that is, others will catch the disease of that sentence, and this infecting of others will torment a man’s self. The whole is thus; *when she bleeds, thou needest no greater hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by pronouncing a sentence upon her.* What hodge-podge does he make here! Never was Dutch grout such clogging, thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the stomach; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

‘Now to dish up the poet’s broth, that I promised:—

“For when we’re dead, and our freed souls enlarged  
Of nature’s grosser burden we’re discharg’d,  
Then gently, as a happy lover’s sigh,  
Like wandering meteors through the air we’ll fly,  
And in our airy walk, as subtle guests,  
We’ll steal into our cruel fathers’ breasts,  
There read their souls, and track each passion’s sphere:  
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here.  
And in their orbs view the dark characters  
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood and wars.  
We’ll blot out all those hideous draughts, and write  
Pure and white forms; then with a radiant light  
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be  
Gentle as nature in its infancy:  
Till soften’d by our charms their furies cease,  
And their revenge resolves into a peace.  
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,  
Whom living we made foes, dead we’ll make friends.”

30

If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer myself to the stomach of any moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster white-broth. It is a kind of giblet porridge, made of the giblets of a couple of young

geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous draughts, dark characters, white forms, and radiant lights*, designed not only to please appetite and indulge luxury, but it is also physical, being an approved medicine to purge choler: for it is propounded by Morena, as a receipt to cure their fathers of their choleric humours: and were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor's bill. To conclude, it is porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis a pig with a pudding in the belly, 'tis I know not what: for, certainly, never any one that pretended to write sense <sup>10</sup> had the impudence before to put such stuff as this into the mouths of those that were to speak it before an audience, whom he did not take to be all fools; and after that to print it too, and expose it to the examination of the world. But let us see what we can make of this stuff:—

“For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarg'd—”

Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have *our freed souls set free*. Now if to have a soul set free is to be dead, then to have a *freed soul* set free is to have a dead man die.

“Then gentle, as a happy lover's sigh—” 20

They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh*, like two wandering meteors,

“—shall fly through the air—”

That is, they shall mount above like falling stars, or else they shall skip like two Jacks-with-lanthorns, or Will-with-a-wisp, and Madge-with-a-candle.

‘*And in their airy walk steal into their cruel fathers' breasts, like subtle guests.* So that their *fathers' breasts* must be in an *airy walk*, an *airy walk* of a *flier*. *And there they will read their souls, and track the spheres of their passions.* That is, <sup>30</sup> these walking fliers, Jack-with-a-lanthorn, &c., will put on his spectacles, and fall a *reading souls*, and put on his pumps

and fall a *tracking of spheres*; so that he will read and run, walk and fly at the same time! Oh! Nimble Jack. *Then he will see, how revenge here, how ambition there*—The birds will hop about. *And then view the dark characters of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs: Track the characters to their forms!* Oh! rare sport for Jack. Never was place so full of game as these breasts! You cannot stir but flush a sphere, start a character, or unkennel an orb!

Settle's is said to have been the first play embellished with 10 sculptures; those ornaments seem to have given poor Dryden great disturbance. He tries however to ease his pain, by venting his malice in a parody:—

‘The poet has not only been so impudent to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to defend it with an epistle; like a saucy booth-keeper, that, when he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle and fight with any that would not like it, or would offer to discover it; for which arrogance our poet receives this correction; and to jerk him a little the sharper, I will not transpose his verse, but by the help of his 20 own words trans-nonsense sense, that, by my stuff, people may judge the better what his is:—

“Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done  
From press, and plates in fleets do homeward come:

And in ridiculous and humble pride,  
Their course in ballad-singers’ baskets guide,  
Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,  
From the gay shews thy dainty sculptures make.  
Thy lines a mess of rhyming nonsense yield,  
A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill’d.

30 No grain of sense does in one line appear,  
Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast bear.  
With noise they move, and from players’ mouths rebound,  
When their tongues dance to thy words’ empty sound.  
By thee inspir’d the rumbling verses roll,  
As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul:  
And with that soul they seem taught duty too,  
To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,

As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,  
 To th' lowest rank of fops thy praise advance;  
 To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear;  
 Their loud claps echo to the theatre.  
 From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads,  
 Fame sings thy praise with mouths of loggerheads.  
 With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,  
 'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,  
 Who have their tribute sent, and homage given,  
 As men in whispers send loud noise to heaven."

'Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle: and now we are come from aboard his dancing, masking, rebounding, breathing fleet; and as if we had landed at Gotham, we meet nothing but fools and nonsense.'

Such was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terror; rage with little provocation, and terror with little danger. To see the highest minds thus levelled with the meanest may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that 20 minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitudes.

The 'Mock Astrologer,' a comedy, is dedicated to the illustrious Duke of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his studies. It is unpleasing to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his treatise on horsemanship.

The preface seems very elaborately written, and contains 30 many just remarks on the fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of Cinthio; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish stories; Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce are judicious and profound. He

endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers; which is only to say, that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism, he alleges a favourable expression of the King: 'He only desired that they, who accuse me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine;' and then relates how much labour he spends in fitting for the English stage what he borrows from others.

10 'Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr,' was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism; and were at length, if his own confession may be trusted, the shame of the writer.

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

20 It was written before the 'Conquest of Granada,' but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. 'I considered that pleasure was not the only end of poesy, and that even the instructions of morality were not so wholly the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose.' Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not shew his malice to the parsons.

30 The two parts of the 'Conquest of Granada' are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders; to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour, and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All

the rays of romantic heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without enquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity and majestic madness: such as, if it is sometimes despised, is often reverenced, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing. 10

In the Epilogue to the second part of the 'Conquest of Granada,' Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this Epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults of the English poets who have written in the dramatic, epic, or lyric way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatic writers, he has given us in his prefaces, and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he 20 shews faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the critics that attacked it was Martin Clifford, to whom Sprat addressed the Life of Cowley, with such veneration of his critical powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. Percy, were 30 at last obtained; and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first letter his observation is only general: 'You do live,' says he, 'in as much ignorance and darkness as you did

in the womb: your writings are like a Jack-of-all-trades shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee.'

In the second, he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. 'But I am,' says he, 'strangely mistaken if I have not seen this very Almanzor of yours in some disguise about this town, and 10 passing under another name. Pr'ythee tell me true, was not this Huffcap once the Indian Emperor, and at another time did he not call himself Maximin? Was not Lyndaraxa once called Almera? I mean under Montezuma the Indian Emperor. I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other. You are therefore a strange unconscionable thief; thou art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too.'

Now was Settle's time to take his revenge. He wrote a 20 vindication of his own lines; and, if he is forced to yield anything, makes reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analyzing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the description of the ships in the 'Indian Emperor,' of which however he does not deny the excellence; but intends to shew that by studied misconstruction everything may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited. The 30 following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages:—

'Fate after him below with pain did move,  
And victory could scarce keep pace above.'

These two lines, if he can shew me any sense or thought

in, or anything but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his observations on Morocco sense.'

In the 'Empress of Morocco' were these lines:—

'I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,  
Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there.'

On which Dryden made this remark:—

'I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country: the sphere of Morocco, as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water; but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave,' &c.

'So *sphere* must not be sense, unless it relate to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in "Granada":'

"I'll to the turrets of the palace go,  
And add new fire to those that fight below.  
Thence, hero-like, with torches by my side,  
(Far be the omen tho') my love I'll guide.  
No, like his better fortune I'll appear,  
With open arms, loose vail and flowing hair, }  
Just flying forward from my rowling sphere."

'I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be so critical in other men's writings. Fortune is fancied standing on a globe, not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first act.

'Because *Elkanah's* similes are the most unlike things to what they are compared in the world, I'll venture to start a simile in his "Annus Mirabilis":' he gives this poetical description of the ship called the "London":—

"The goodly London in her gallant trim,  
The Phœnix-daughter of the vanquisht old,  
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,  
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.  
Her flag aloft spread ruffling in the wind,  
And sanguine streamers seem'd the flood to fire:  
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,  
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire.

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,  
 Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,  
 Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,  
 She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves."

What a wonderful pother is here, to make all these poetical beautifications of a ship! that is, a *phœnix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last: nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seemed a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to floating palaces; a comparison to the purpose was a perfection he did not arrive to till his "Indian Emperor's" days. But perhaps his similitude has more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great many guns in her, and they, put altogether, made the sting in the wasp's tail: for this is all the reason I can guess why it seem'd a *wasp*. But, because we will allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phœnix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such an animal may do much towards the heightening the fancy.

It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this:—

" Two ifs scarce make one possibility.  
 If justice will take all and nothing give,  
 Justice, methinks, is not distributive.  
 To die or kill you, is the alternative,  
 Rather than take your life, I will not live."

Observe how prettily our author chops logic in heroic verse. Three such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but himself would have come within the noise of. But he's a man of general learning, and all comes into his play.

" Twould have done well, too, if he could have met with a rant or two worth the observation, such as,—

“Move swiftly, sun, and fly a lover’s pace,  
Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.”

‘But surely the sun, whether he flies a lover’s or not a lover’s pace, leaves weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

‘Poor Robin, or any other of the philo-mathematics, would have given him satisfaction in the point.

“If I could kill thee now, thy fate’s so low,  
That I must stoop, ere I can give the blow.  
But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,  
That all thy men,  
Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.”

‘Now where that is, Almanzor’s fate is fixt, I cannot guess; but wherever it is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all Abdalla’s subjects piled upon one another might not pull down his fate so well as without piling; besides, I think Abdalla so wise a man that if Almanzor had told him piling his men upon his back might do the feat, he would scarce bear such a weight for the pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

“The people like a headlong torrent go,  
And every dam they break or overflow.  
But, unoppes’d, they either lose their force,  
Or wind in volumes to their former course.”

A very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never so much, can never return to their former course, unless he can suppose that fountains can go upwards, which is impossible; nay, more, in the foregoing page he tells us so too. A trick of a very unfaithful memory,—

“But can no more than fountains upward flow.”

Which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is much more impossible. Besides, if he goes to quibble, and say

that it is possible by art water may be made return, and the same water run twice in one and the same channel, then he quite confutes what he says, for it is by being opposed that it runs into its former course; for all engines that make water so return, do it by compulsion and opposition. Or if he means a headlong torrent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, but come fore-right back (if their upright lies straight to their former course), and that by opposition of the sea-water, that drives them back to again.

‘And for fancy, when he lights of anything like it, 'tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought in his “Annus Mirabilis:”—

“Old father Thames raised up his reverend head;  
But feared the fate of Simois would return;  
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed;  
And shrunk his waters back into his urn.”

‘This is stolen from Cowley’s “Davideis,” p. 9:—

“Swift Jordan started, and straight backward fled,  
Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.  
And when the Spaniards their assault begin,  
At once beat those without and those within.”

‘This Almanzor speaks of himself, and sure for one man to conquer an army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is something difficult; but this flight is pardonable to some we meet with in “Granada.” Osmin, speaking of Almanzor:—

“Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,  
Made a just battle, ere the bodies join’d.”

30 Pray what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind!* A tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet, for if he supposes the tempest to

be something distinct from the wind, yet as being the effect of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous; so that if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the other, those two *ifs* will scarce make one *possibility*. Enough of Settle.

‘Marriage-à-la-Mode’ is a comedy, dedicated to the Earl of Rochester, whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The Earl of Rochester, therefore, was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents to

as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to Juvenal. ‘The Assignation; or, Love in a Nunnery,’ a comedy, was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley, in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

‘Amboyna’ is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than ‘The Virgin Martyr,’ though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his Epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which Tyrtæus of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

‘Troilus and Cressida’ is a play altered from Shakspeare, but so altered that even in Langbaine’s opinion ‘the last scene in the third act is a masterpiece.’ It is introduced by a discourse on ‘The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy,’ to which I suspect that Rymer’s book had given occasion.

The 'Spanish Friar' is a tragi-comedy, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the Papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies, and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the public.

It was Dryden's opinion, at least for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comic and tragic scenes, and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events and the fatigue of toilsome passions. 'Whoever,' says he, 'cannot perform both parts, *is but half a writer for the stage.*'

The 'Duke of Guise,' a tragedy written in conjunction with Lee, as 'Œdipus' had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the Court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him, though at last he seems to withdraw from the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play, and 'he happened,' says Dryden, 'to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite. Two thirds of it belonged to him, and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half or somewhat more of the fifth.'

This was a play written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England, and this intention produced the controversy.

'Albion and Albania' is a musical drama or opera, written,

like the 'Duke of Guise,' against the Republicans. With what success it was performed I have not found.

'The State of Innocence and Fall of Man' is termed by him an opera; it is rather a tragedy in heroic rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:—

‘Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,  
Jealous I was that some less skilful hand,  
(Such as disquiet always what is well,  
And by ill-imitating would excel,) 10  
Might hence presume the whole creation's day,  
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.’

It is another of his hasty productions, for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

This composition is addressed to the Princess of Modena, then Duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion. 20

The preface contains an apology for heroic verse and poetic licence, by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold fictions and ambitious figures.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted cannot be overpassed: 'I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent, and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me.' These 30 copies as they gathered faults were apparently manuscript, and he lived in an age very unlike ours if many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not

seek an apology in falsehood, but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

‘Aureng Zebe<sup>1</sup>’ is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their critics upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. His country is at such a distance that the manners might be safely falsified and the incidents feigned, for remoteness of place is remarked by Racine to afford the same conveniences to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme, and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial, but the dialogue is often domestic, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated, and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure.

This play is addressed to the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of 20 verses and a critic. In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epic poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when he told it more plainly in his preface to Juvenal. ‘The design,’ says he, ‘you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times nor too distant from them.’

‘All for Love, or the World well Lost<sup>2</sup>,’ a tragedy founded upon the story of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us ‘is the 30 only play which he wrote for himself,’ the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest improprieties of style or character, but it has one fault equal to many, though rather

<sup>1</sup> 1676.

<sup>2</sup> 1678.

moral than critical, that by admitting the romantic omnipotence of love he has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topics of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their elegance and spriteliness.

‘Limberham, or the Kind Keeper<sup>1</sup>’ is a comedy which, 10 after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to, but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it ‘so much exposed the keeping part of the town.’

‘Œdipus’ is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

‘Don Sebastian’ is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatic performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents, and though it is not without sallies of frantic dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet as it makes approaches to the possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. A+ amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for comic, but which I suppose that age did not much commend and 30 this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatic poetry.

‘Amphytrion’ is a comedy derived from Plautus and Molière. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance, and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

‘Cleomenes<sup>1</sup>’ is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the ‘Guardian,’ and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy stripling: ‘Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan.’ ‘That, Sir,’ said Dryden, ‘perhaps is true; but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero.’

‘King Arthur’ is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited, and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage. In the dedication to the Marquis 20 of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the Duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and ‘Arthur’ was exhibited no more.

His last drama was ‘Love Triumphant,’ a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the Earl of Salisbury he mentions ‘the lowness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed.’

This play appeared in 1694. It is said to have been 30 unsuccessful. The catastrophe proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success.

From such a number of theatrical pieces it will be supposed by most readers that he must have improved his fortune, at least that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. 10 The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great, and the poet had for a long time but a single night. The first that had two nights was Southerne, and the first that had three was Rowe. There were however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit which Dryden forbore to practise, and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of a third night, the dedication, and the copy.

Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such 20 elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.

To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism, a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously as occasions arose. By these dissertations the public judgment must have been much 30 improved, and Swift, who conversed with Dryden, relates that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till being asked to write one for Mr. Southerne, he demanded three: 'Not,' said he, 'young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap.'

Though he declares that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatic, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged by contract to furnish four plays a-year.

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he published 'All for Love,' 'Assignation,' two parts of the 'Conquest of Granada,' 'Sir Martin Mar-all,' and the 'State of Innocence,' six complete plays; with a celerity of performance which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shews such facility of composition, such readiness of language, and such copiousness of sentiment, as since the time of Lopez de Vega perhaps no other author has possessed.

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had critics to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the Duke of Buckingham and Earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterised him in 1671 by the name of Bayes in the 'Rehearsal,' a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler the author of 'Hudibras,' Martin Clifford of the Charterhouse, and Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time and the number of hands employed upon this performance, in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find anything that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history is tedious and troublesome ; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon enquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The 'Rehearsal' was played in 1671, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the 'Conquest of Granada' and 'Assignation,' which were not published till 1678, in 'Marriage-à-la-Mode,' published in 1673, and in 'Tyrannic Love' of 1677. These contradictions shew how rashly satire is applied.

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant, who in the first draft was characterised by the name of Bilboa. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the 'Rehearsal' still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. Bayes hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise ; how this affected Dryden does not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution by mishaps, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. Bayes probably imitated the dress and mimicked the manner of Dryden ; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases or customary exclamations. Bayes, when he is to write, is blooded and purged ; this, as Lamotte relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the 'Rehearsal' by which malice was gratified ; the debate between Love and Honour,

which keeps Prince Volscius in a single boot, is said to have alluded to the misconduct of the Duke of Ormond, who lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a mistress.

The Earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to persuade the public that its approbation had been to that time misplaced. Settle was awhile in high reputation: his 'Empress of Morocco'<sup>1</sup>, having first delighted the town, was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the ladies of the Court. Now was the poetical meteor at the highest; the next moment began its fall. Rochester withdrew his patronage, seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, 'to have a judgment contrary to that of the town.' Perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless they gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, which his frequent bursts of resentment give reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of some future censure; but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamantine confidence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for, though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously censured, he would by denying part of the charge have confessed the rest; and as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left in that perplexity which generality produces, a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which,

unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer from about thirty-five to sixty-three may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied by the composition of eight-and-twenty pieces for the stage, Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But, how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more, for in 1679 a paper of verses called 'An Essay on Satire' was shewn about in manuscript, by which the Earl of Rochester, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and others were so much provoked, that, as was supposed, for the actors were never discovered, they procured Dryden, whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his 'Art of Poetry<sup>1</sup>', where he says of Dryden,—

‘Though prais’d and beaten for another’s rhymes,  
His own deserves as great applause sometimes.’

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He prefixed the 'Life of Polybius' to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers, and those of Lucian and Plutarch to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English 'Tacitus' he translated the first book, and if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation, but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of Tacitus, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the public, and writing merely for money, was contented to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the 'Epistles' of Ovid being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was necessary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on such occasions was regularly summoned, prefixed a discourse upon translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation, which must for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holyday had fixed the judgment of the nation, and it was not easily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanshaw, Denham, Waller, and Cowley had tried to give examples of a different practice.

In 1681 Dryden became yet more conspicuous by uniting politics with poetry in the memorable satire called 'Absalom and Achitophel,' written against the faction which, by Lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the Duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which personal satire was applied to the support of public principles, and in which therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager, and the sale so large, that my father, an old bookseller, told me he had not known it equalled but by Sacheverell's trial.

The reason of this general perusal Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets, and thinks that curiosity to decipher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to enquire why those verses were read, which to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment.

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by

Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turns to the shafts of satire, which though neither so well pointed nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called 'Dryden's Satire on his Muse,' ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to Somers, who was afterwards Chancellor. The poem, whosesoever it was, has much virulence, and some spriteliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of 'Absalom and Achitophel' had two answers, now both forgotten; one called 'Azaria and Hushai,' the other 'Absalom Senior.' Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes 'Absalom Senior' to Settle, by quoting in his verses against him the second line. 'Azaria and Hushai' was, as Wood says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year<sup>1</sup> he published the 'Medal,' of which the subject is a medal struck on Lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution by the *ignoramus* of a grand jury of Londoners.

In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by the same antagonist. Elkanah Settle, who had answered 'Absalom,' appeared with equal courage in opposition to the 'Medal,' and published an answer called 'The Medal Reversed,' with so much success in both encounters that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them, who died forgotten in an hospital, and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying

an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and the end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding, might with truth have had inscribed upon his stone,—

‘Here lies the rival and antagonist of Dryden.’

Settle was for this rebellion severely chastised by Dryden under the name of Doeg, in the second part of ‘Absalom and Achitophel<sup>1</sup>’, and was perhaps for his factious audacity made to the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor’s day. Of these bards he was the last, and seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions, for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the virtues of Judge Jeffries, and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative?

Of translated fragments or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles or settle the dates would be tedious, with little use. It may be observed, that as Dryden’s genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topic.

Soon after the accession of King James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the Church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the Court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir Kenelm Digby embraced popery, the two Rainolds reciprocally converted one another, and Chillingworth himself was awhile so entangled in the wilds of controversy as to retire for quiet to an infallible Church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties or such motives as may either unite them to the Church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who per-

haps never enquired why he was a protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a papist, overborne by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shews only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. | He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love truth only for herself. | Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time, <sup>10</sup> and as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known, and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was then the state of popery; every artifice was used to shew it in its fairest form; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an <sup>20</sup> elevated soul, and that whoever is wise is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his Judge.

The priests having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controversial <sup>30</sup> papers found in the strong-box of Charles the Second, and, what was yet harder, to defend them against Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting popery, he was employed to translate Maimbourg's 'History of the League,' which he

published<sup>1</sup> with a large introduction. His name is likewise prefixed to the English ‘Life of Francis Xavier’; but I know not that he ever owned himself the translator. Perhaps the use of his name was a pious fraud, which however seems not to have had much effect, for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of Xavier’s Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter, and the occasion of it is said to have been, that the Queen, when she solicited a son, <sup>10</sup> made vows to him as her tutelary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate Varillas’s ‘History of Heresies,’ and when Burnet published ‘Remarks’ upon it, to have written an ‘Answer’; upon which Burnet makes the following observation:—

‘I have been informed from England, that a gentleman who is famous both for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating M. Varillas’s “History”; but that, as soon as my “Reflections” appeared, he discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone.

<sup>20</sup> Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his ‘Answer,’ he will perhaps go on with his translation; and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as the conversation that he had set on between the hinds and panthers, and all the rest of animals, for whom M. Varillas may serve well enough as an author; and this history and that poem are such extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that the age has produced.

If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, he will <sup>30</sup> hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion to choose one of the worst. It is true, he had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit, but as for his morals, it is scarce possible for him to grow a worse

man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months' labour; but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he would go on and finish his translation. By that it will appear whether the English nation, which is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing our debate, pronounced in M. Varillas's favour, or in mine. It is true, Mr. D. will suffer a little by it, but at least it will serve to keep him in from other extravagances; and if he gains little honour by this work, yet he cannot lose so much by it as he has done by his last employment.'

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controversy, he was desirous of trying whether, by bringing poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profession. To reason in verse was, indeed, one of his powers: but subtlety and harmony united are still feeble when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he published<sup>1</sup> the 'Hind and Panther,' a poem in which the Church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white hind*, defends her tenets against the Church of England, represented by the *panther*, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable which exhibits two beasts talking theology, appears at once full of absurdity; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the 'City Mouse and Country Mouse,' a parody, written by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not likely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published by the facetious Thomas Brown, of which the two first were called 'Reasons of Mr. Bayes's changing his Religion': and

the third, 'The Reasons of Mr. Hains the player's Conversion and Re-conversion.' The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the public attention.

In the two first dialogues Bayes is brought into the company of Crites and Eugenius, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatic poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. Bayes and Mr. Hains.

10 Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow*; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests or gross buffoonery, so that his performances have little intrinsic value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works: what sense or knowledge they contain, is disgraced by the garb in which it is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden 20 *little Bayes*. 'Ajax,' who happens to be mentioned, is 'he that wore as many cow-hides upon his shield as would have furnished half the King's army with shoe-leather.'

Being asked whether he has seen the 'Hind and Panther,' Crites answers: 'Seen it! Mr. Bayes, why I can stir nowhere but it pursues me; it haunts me worse than a pewter-buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a bandbox, when my laundress brings home my linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house; sometimes it surprises me in a trunkmaker's-shop: and sometimes 30 it refreshes my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can quote that noble treatise the "Worth of a

Penny" to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed apples and penny custards.'

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons. 'To secure one's chastity,' says Bayes, 'little more is necessary than to leave off a correspondence with the other sex, which, to a wise man, is no greater a punishment than it would be to a fanatic parson to be forbid seeing "the Cheats" and "The Committee": or for my Lord Mayor and Aldermen to be interdicted the sight of the "London Cuckold."'-This is <sup>10</sup> the general strain, and therefore I shall be easily excused the labour of more transcription.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions: 'You began,' says Crites to Bayes, 'with a very indifferent religion, and have not mended the matter in your last choice. It was but reason that your Muse, which appeared first in a Tyrant's quarrel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usurpations of the Hind.'

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouse his <sup>20</sup> imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days were at hand, and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the anticipated blessings. He published a poem filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity; predictions of which it is not necessary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and every blossom of popish hope was blasted for ever by the Revolution. A papist now could be no longer Laureate. The revenue, which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he <sup>30</sup> had formerly stigmatized by the name of *Og*. Dryden could not decently complain that he was deposed, but seemed very angry that Shadwell succeeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquisitely

satirical, called ‘Mac Flecknoe,’ of which the ‘Dunciad,’ as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan and more diversified in its incidents.

It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when, as Chamberlain, he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantic or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a-year is often enough given to claims less cogent, by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but if he suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of King James he had written nothing for the stage, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

Times were now changed. Dryden was no longer the Court poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering himself as disengaged by the public, or perhaps expecting a second revolution, he produced ‘Don Sebastian’ in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new version of ‘Juvenal and Persius.’ Of ‘Juvenal’ he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires; and of ‘Persius’ the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the public, as nurslings of the Muses. The fourteenth of ‘Juvenal’ was the work of John, and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design

which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epic as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprises and terrors <sup>10</sup> of enchantments which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of pagan deities afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination; but, as Boileau observes, and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken, with this incurable defect, that in a contest between heaven and hell we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to <sup>20</sup> surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings thus opposed to each other must have been represented as defending guilt.

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers and enlarged our language, and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instruction to rectify our opinions and purify our manners. <sup>30</sup>

What he required as the indispensable condition of such an undertaking, a public stipend, was not likely in those times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us, nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan he charged Blackmore with stealing; only, says he, *the guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage.*

In 1694 he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Fresnoy's 'Art of Painting' into English prose. The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, so such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697 he published his version of the works of Virgil; and that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the 'Pastorals' to the Lord Clifford, the 'Georgics' to the Earl of Chesterfield, and the 'Æneid' to the Earl of Mulgrave. This economy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not pass without observation.

This translation was censured<sup>1</sup> by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled by Pope *the fairest of critics*, because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his 'Fables,' published in 1699, in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson; by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

In this volume is comprised the well-known ode on 'St. Cecilia's Day,' which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose 'Equivoque,' a poem of only three hundred and forty-six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it!

Part of this book of 'Fables' is the first Iliad in English,

intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the first of May, 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died in Gerard-street of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of Congreve's Life, by a writer of I know not what credit, are 10 thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary:—

‘Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, Dr. Thomas Sprat, then Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the Lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a present of the ground, which was forty pounds, with all the other Abbey fees. The Lord Halifax likewise sent to the Lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her son, that, if they would give him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would 20 inter him with a gentleman's private funeral, and afterwards bestow five hundred pounds on a monument in the Abbey; which as they had no reason to refuse they accepted. On the Saturday following the company came: the corpse was put into a velvet hearse, and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with company, attended. When they were just ready to move, the Lord Jefferies, son of the Lord Chancellor Jefferies, with some of his rakish companions coming by, asked whose funeral it was: and being told Mr. Dryden's, he said, “What, shall Dryden, the greatest honour and 30 ornament of the nation, be buried after this private manner! No, gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, alight and join with me in gaining my Lady's consent to let me have the honour of his interment, which

shall be after another manner than this ; and I will bestow a thousand pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in the coaches, not knowing of the Bishop of Rochester's favour, nor of the Lord Halifax's generous design (they both having, out of respect to the family, enjoined the Lady Elizabeth and her son to keep their favour concealed to the world, and let it pass for their own expense), readily came out of the coaches, and attended Lord Jefferies up to the Lady's bedside, who was then sick ; he repeated <sup>10</sup> the purport of what he had before said ; but she absolutely refusing, he fell on his knees, vowing never to rise till his request was granted. The rest of the company by his desire kneeled also ; and the lady, being under a sudden surprise, fainted away. As soon as she recovered her speech, she cried, *No, no.* "Enough, gentlemen," replied he ; "my Lady is very good, she says, *Go, go.*" She repeated her former words with all her strength, but in vain, for her feeble voice was lost in their acclamations of joy ; and the Lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to Mr. Russell's, <sup>20</sup> an undertaker's in Cheapside, and leave it there till he should send orders for the embalmment, which, he added, should be after the royal manner. His directions were obeyed, the company dispersed, and Lady Elizabeth and her son remained inconsolable. The next day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the Lord Halifax and the Bishop, to excuse his mother and himself, by relating the real truth. But neither his Lordship nor the Bishop would admit of any plea, especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted, the ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself waiting for some <sup>30</sup> time without any corpse to bury. The undertaker, after three days expectance of orders for embalmment without receiving any, waited on the Lord Jefferies, who pretending ignorance of the matter, turned it off with an ill-natured jest, saying, "That those who observed the orders of a drunken

frolic deserved no better ; that he remembered nothing at all of it ; and that he might do what he pleased with the corpse." Upon this, the undertaker waited upon the Lady Elizabeth and her son, and threatened to bring the corpse home, and set it before the door. They desired a day's respite, which was granted. Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome letter to the Lord Jefferies, who returned it with this cool answer, "That he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it." He then addressed the Lord Halifax and the Bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to do anything in it. In this distress Dr. Garth sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians, and proposed a funeral by subscription, to which himself set a most noble example. At last a day, about three weeks after Mr. Dryden's decease, was appointed for the interment: Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration at the College over the corpse, which was attended to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. When the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden sent a challenge to the Lord Jefferies, who refusing to answer it, he sent several others, and went often himself, but could neither get a letter delivered, nor admittance to speak to him ; which so incensed him, that he resolved, since his Lordship refused to answer him like a gentleman, that he would watch an opportunity to meet, and fight off-hand, though with all the rules of honour ; which his Lordship hearing, left the town : and Mr. Charles Dryden could never have the satisfaction of meeting him, though he sought it till his death with the utmost application.'

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence ; nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar, and he only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confused.

Supposing the story true, we may remark that the gradual change of manners, though imperceptible in the process,

appears great when different times, and those not very distant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken lord should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be justled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he should thrust himself into a house, he would be sent roughly away; and what is yet more to the honour of the present time, I believe that those who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for such an accident, have withdrawn  
10 their contributions.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though the Duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramatic works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, he lay long without distinction, till the Duke of Buckinghamshire gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, with circumstances, according to the satire  
20 imputed to Lord Somers, not very honourable to either party; by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was Usher of the Palace to Pope Clement XI, and visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor.

John was author of a comedy called 'The Husband his own Cuckold.' He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man conscious of hypocritical profession in  
30 himself is not likely to convert others, and as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden I know not any account; of his

mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. ‘He was,’ we are told, ‘of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those that had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access ; but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others : he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations : he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of everything that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it ; but then his communication was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit the reprehensions of others in respect of his own oversights or mistakes.’

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship ; and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden, however, is shown in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues, but courtesy and good-humour are often found with little real worth. Since Con-

greve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value; he appears to have known, in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his conversation because he expected it to be solicited; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such reverence of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness: he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation; we allow his claims, and love 20 his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness, and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural; the purpose was such as no man would confess; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe?

He has been described as magisterially presiding over the 30 younger writers, and assuming the distribution of poetical fame; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgment is incontestable may, without usurpation, examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct;

but there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine, and not one of those whose sprightly sayings diverted company; and one of his censurers makes him say—

‘Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay;  
To writing bred, I knew not what to say.’

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation; whom merriment confuses and objection disconcerts; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled.

Of Dryden's sluggishness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language; his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. ‘His thoughts,’ when he wrote, ‘flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care was which to choose and which to reject.’ Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk, yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the Duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden and those with whom Dryden consorted; who they were Carte has not told, but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with boasting of his familiarity with the great; and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must however be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the procurers of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. One of his enemies has accused him of lewdness in his conversation; but if accusation without proof be credited, who shall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness and abject adulation; but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained, the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity. Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

Of dramatic immorality he did not want examples among his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries; but in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled, except by Afra Behn in an address to Eleanor Gwyn. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself nor supposes it in his patron. As many odiferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by his expenses, however lavish. He had all the forms of

excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him whom he wished to court on the morrow new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity; he considers the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is indeed not <sup>10</sup> certain that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praises of others and of himself is always intermingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of distress. His works are undervalued, his merit is unrewarded, and *he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among English-<sup>20</sup> men.* To his critics he is sometimes contemptuous, sometimes resentful, and sometimes submissive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, mistakes his interest when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by shewing that he was affected by their censures, and gives lasting importance to names which, left to themselves, would vanish from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not often depart; his complaints are for the greater part general; he seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name. He condescended indeed to a controversy with Settle, in <sup>30</sup> which he perhaps may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling; and since Settle is sunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himself.

Among answers to critics no poetical attacks or altercations

are to be included; they are, like other poems, effusions of genius produced as much to obtain praise as to obviate censure. These Dryden practised, and in these he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the preface to his 'Fables.' To the censure of Collier, whose remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticisms, he makes little reply; being, at the age of sixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouse. He complains of Collier's rudeness, and the 10 'horse-play of his raillery,' and asserts that 'in many places he has perverted by his glosses the meaning' of what he censures; but in other things he confesses that he is justly taxed, and says, with great calmness and candour, 'I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expressions of mine that can be truly accused of obscenity, immorality, or profaneness, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, he will be glad of my repentance.' Yet, as our best dispositions are imperfect, he left standing in the same book a reflection on Collier of great asperity, and 20 indeed of more asperity than wit.

Blackmore he represents as made his enemy by the poem of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' which, 'he thinks a little hard upon his fanatic patrons;' and charges him with borrowing the plan of his 'Arthur' from the preface to Juvenal; 'though he had,' says he, 'the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel.'

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a 'Satire upon Wit'<sup>1</sup>, in which, having lamented the exuberance of false wit and the deficiency of true, he proposes that all wit 30 should be re-coined before it is current, and appoints masters of assay who shall reject all that is light or debased:—

'Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless dross  
Is purg'd away, there will be mighty loss;

Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,  
 When thus refin'd, will grievous sufferers be;  
 Into the melting pot when Dryden comes,  
 What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes!  
 How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,  
 And wicked mixture, shall be purged away!

Thus stands the passage in the last edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the censure, beginning thus:

‘But what remains will be so pure, ’twill bear  
 Th’ examination of the most severe.’

Blackmore, finding the censure resented and the civility disregarded, ungenerously omitted the softer part. Such variations discover a writer who consults his passions more than his virtue, and it may be reasonably supposed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cause.

Of Milbourne he wrote only in general terms, such as are always ready at the call of anger, whether just or not: a short extract will be sufficient. ‘He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon priesthood; if I have, I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his share of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall never be able to force himself upon me for an adversary; I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him.

‘As for the rest of those who have written against me, they are such scoundrels that they deserve not the least notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourne are only distinguished from the crowd by being remembered to their infamy.’

Dryden indeed discovered in many of his writings an affected and absurd malignity to priests and priesthood, which naturally raised him many enemies, and which was sometimes as unseasonably resented as it was exerted. Trapp is angry that he calls the sacrificer in the ‘Georgics’

the *holy butcher*: the translation is indeed ridiculous, but Trapp's anger arises from his zeal, not for the author, but the priest; as if any reproach of the follies of paganism could be extended to the preachers of truth.

Dryden's dislike of the priesthood is imputed by Langbaine, and I think by Brown, to a repulse which he suffered when he solicited ordination; but he denies, in the preface to his 'Fables,' that he ever designed to enter into the Church, and such a denial he would not have hazarded if he could not have been convicted of falsehood.

Malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence of religion, and Dryden affords no exception to this observation. His writings exhibit many passages which, with all the allowance that can be made for characters and occasions, are such as piety would not have admitted, and such as may vitiate light and unprincipled minds. But there is no reason for supposing that he disbelieved the religion which he disobeyed. He forgot his duty rather than disowned it. His tendency to profaneness is the effect of 20 levity, negligence, and loose conversation, with a desire of accommodating himself to the corruption of the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of critics was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless 30 misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigencies. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in severe pain. Of his supplies or his expenses no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laureate, to which King James added the office of Historiographer, perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual, and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great, and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the following papers:—

‘ I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq., or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which 20 the said John Dryden, Esq., is to deliver to me, Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's possession. And I do hereby further promise, and engage myself, to make up the said sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq., his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

‘ In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and 30 seal, this twentieth day of March, 169 $\frac{8}{9}$ .

‘ JACOB TONSON.

‘ Sealed and delivered, being first duly stampt, pursuant

to the Acts of Parliament for that purpose, in the presence of

‘BEN. PORTLOCK,

‘WILL. CONGREVE.’

‘March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1698.

‘Received then of Mr. Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings, in pursuance of an agreement for ten thousand verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more or less; he to the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the foresaid sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings three hundred pounds at the beginning of the second impression of the foresaid ten thousand verses;

‘I say received by me,

‘JOHN DRYDEN.

‘Witness, CHARLES DRYDEN.’

Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.*, is 268*l.* 15*s.*

It is manifest from the dates of this contract, that it relates to the volume of ‘Fables,’ which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment must have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining in which he desires Tonson to bring him money to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were narrower and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had

cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. 'This,' said Dryden, 'is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away; for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him; and if you leave me unprotected I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue.'

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known: Mr. Derrick, who 10 consulted some of his relations, was informed that his 'Fables' obtained five hundred pounds from the Duchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the magnificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of 'Alexander's Feast.'

In those days the economy of government was yet unsettled, and the payments of the Exchequer were dilatory and uncertain: of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureate sometimes felt the effects; for in one of 20 his prefaces he complains of those who, being intrusted with the distribution of the Prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements tradition has retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me that at the house which he frequented, called Will's Coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the 30 summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present

age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the Appendix to the 'Life of Congreve' is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled ; but I know not the writer's means of information or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horoscope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint :—

10      ' The utmost malice of the stars is past.—  
         Now frequent *trines* the happier lights among,  
         And *high-rais'd Jove*, from his dark prison freed,  
         Those weights took off that on his planet hung,  
         Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.'

He has elsewhere shewn his attention to the planetary powers ; and in the preface to his 'Fables' has endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition, by attributing the same to some of the ancients. The letter, added to this narrative, leaves no doubt of his notions or practice.

20      So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have been able to collect concerning the private life and domestic manners of a man whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critic and a poet.

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DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws 30 of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two 'Arts of English Poetry' were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson

and Cowley; but Dryden's 'Essay on Dramatic Poetry' was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing.

He who having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct, and <sup>10</sup> poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted the evidence ceases to be examined. Of an art universally practised the first teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves, as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The 'Dialogue on the Drama' was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate for reputation, and therefore laboured with that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the <sup>30</sup> public was abated, partly by custom and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so

brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a perpetual model of encomiastic criticism; exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed; but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed was perhaps never more clearly exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians, 'malim cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte sapere;' that 'it was more eligible to go wrong with one than right with the other.' A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's prefaces and Rymer's dis-  
courses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, drest in the graces of elegance; and if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers: Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every

step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not <sup>10</sup> a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes <sup>20</sup> interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trapp, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite says 'Novimus judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri, pulchro sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque Aeneada aequet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam critices normam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc prae manibus habet, et in quo nunc occu- <sup>30</sup> patur.'

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatic rhyme is generally known. Spence, in his remarks on Pope's 'Odyssey,' produces what

he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the '*Æneid*,' in favour of translating an epic poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the '*Iliad*,' some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any license to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by Sewel<sup>1</sup>. His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad if he had heard him thundering 20 out

‘Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso.’

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds to exaggerations somewhat hyperbolical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty if he had condemned him to straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impressed into the service.

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard; he cited 'Gorbuduc,' which he had never seen; gives a false account of Chapman's versification; and discovers, in the preface to his 30 'Fables,' that he translated the first book of the '*Iliad*,' without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge, it is not to be supposed that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient compared with that of common students; but his scholastic acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten <sup>10</sup> track of regular study; from which, if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

In his 'Dialogue on the Drama' he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of 'Medea' is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetic. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or <sup>20</sup> sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shews what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas. His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. <sup>30</sup> There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual

wealth. Of him that knows much it is natural to suppose that he has read with diligence; yet I rather believe that the knowledge of Dryden was gleaned from accidental intelligence and various conversation, by a quick apprehension, a judicious selection and a happy memory, a keen appetite of knowledge and a powerful digestion; by vigilance that permitted nothing to pass without notice, and a habit of reflection that suffered nothing useful to be lost. A mind like Dryden's, always curious, always active, to which every understanding was proud to be associated, and of which every one solicited the regard, by an ambitious display of himself, had a more pleasant, perhaps a nearer way, to knowledge than by the silent progress of solitary reading. I do not suppose that he despised books, or intentionally neglected them; but that he was carried out, by the impetuosity of his genius, to more vivid and speedy instructors; and that his studies were rather desultory and fortuitous than constant and systematical.

It must be confessed that he scarcely ever appears to want book-learning but when he mentions books; and to him may be transferred the praise which he gives his master Charles:—

His conversation, wit, and parts,  
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,  
Were such, dead authors could not give,  
But habitudes of those that live;  
Who, lighting him, did greater lights receive;  
He drain'd from all, and all they knew,  
His apprehension quick, his judgment true:  
That the most learn'd with shame confess,  
His knowledge more, his reading only less.'

Of all this, however, if the proof be demanded, I will not undertake to give it; the atoms of probability, of which my opinion has been formed, lie scattered over all his works; and by him who thinks the question worth his notice, his works must be perused with very close attention.

Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Everything is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*, he does not exhibit 20 a second time the same elegances in the same form, nor appears to have any other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his 30 name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts and rugged

metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham ; they had shown that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do ? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, elegant and gross ; and from a nice distinction of these different parts arises a great part of the beauty of style. But if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors ; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion, and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was therefore before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images ; and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose, had been rarely attempted ; we had few elegances or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet

been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have overborne the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of Cowley. The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden, from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness.

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very 10 illustriously displayed in our poetical translations of ancient writers; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace almost word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, considers it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is said that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age, has struggled hard to comprise every book of his English 'Metamorphoses' in the same number of verses with the original. Holyday had 20 nothing in view but to shew that he understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verses; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor will the labour always be rewarded by understanding them. Cowley saw that such *copiers* were a *servile race*; he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his authors. It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us just rules and examples of translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when they

divaricate, each must take its natural course. Where correspondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. 'Translation therefore,' says Dryden, 'is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase.'

All polished languages have different styles; the concise, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened: hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed, nor sententious affectation to have its points blunted. A translator is to be like his author: it is not his business to excel him.

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed but by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry; and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, which the new translators cited in defence of their practice, he has by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them; but reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigencies in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But as is said by his Sebastian,—

‘What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.’

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed, and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary, has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication till he has satisfied his friends and himself; till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination, and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often, that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the public has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the Muse.

But after so many inaugural gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune who says any thing not said before. Even war and conquest, however splendid, suggests no new images ; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended ; elegances and illustrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation : the composition must be dispatched while conversation is yet busy and admiration fresh ; and haste is to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional compositions may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility, for they cannot be the effect of long study, and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the first public event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroic stanzas have beauties and defects ; the thoughts are vigorous, and though not always proper, shew a mind replete with ideas ; the numbers are smooth, and the diction if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though 'Gondibert' never appears to have been popular ; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification : there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonson's ruggedness ; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile :—

‘He, toss’d by fate,  
Could taste no sweets of youth’s desired age,  
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.’

And afterwards, to shew how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity, he makes this remark:—

‘Well might the ancient poets then confer  
On Night the honour’d name of *counsellor*,  
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,  
We light alone in dark afflictions find.’

His praise of Monk’s dexterity comprises such a cluster of 10 thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found:—

“Twas Monk, whom Providence design’d to loose  
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.  
The blessed saints that watch’d this turning scene  
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,  
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,  
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.  
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore  
Smiles to that changed face that wept before. 20  
With ease such fond chimæras we pursue,  
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue:  
But, when ourselves to action we betake,  
It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make.  
How hard was then his task, at once to be  
What in the body natural we see!  
Man’s Architect distinctly did ordain  
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,  
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense  
The springs of motion from the seat of sense. 30  
‘Twas not the hasty product of a day,  
But the well-ripen’d fruit of wise delay.  
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,  
Would let them play a-while upon the hook.  
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,  
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.  
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,  
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude;  
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,  
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.’ 40

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to forbear the improper use of mythology. After having rewarded the heathen deities for their care,—

‘With Alga who the sacred altar strows?  
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes;  
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain;  
A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main.’

He tells us in the language of religion,—

‘Prayer storm’d the skies, and ravish’d Charles from thence,  
10 As heaven itself is took by violence.’

And afterwards mentions one of the most awful passages of sacred history.

Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,—

‘For by example most we sinn’d before,  
And glass-like, clearness mix’d with frailty bore.’

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to found his sentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles:—

20 ‘The winds, that never moderation knew,  
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;  
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge  
Their straiten’d lungs.—  
It is no longer motion cheats your view;  
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;  
The land returns, and in the white it wears  
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.’

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe some verses, 30 in which he represents France as moving out of its place to receive the King. ‘Though this,’ said Malherbe, ‘was in my time, I do not remember it.’

His poem on the ‘Coronation’ has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deserve to be quoted:—

‘ You have already quench’d sedition’s brand;  
 And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;  
 The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause  
 So far from their own will as to the laws,  
 Him for their umpire and their synod take,  
 And their appeal alone to Cæsar make.’

Here may be found one particle of that old versification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another:—

‘ Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,  
 Creates that joy, but full fruition.’

10

In the verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a conceit so hopeless at the first view, that few would have attempted it, and so successfully laboured that though at last it gives the reader more perplexity than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs, yet it must be valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive:—

‘ In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,  
 Until the earth seems join’d unto the sky:  
 So in this hemisphere our utmost view  
 Is only bounded by our king and you:  
 Our sight is limited where you are join’d,  
 And beyond that no farther heaven can find.  
 So well your virtues do with his agree,  
 That, though your orbs of different greatness be,  
 Yet both are for each other’s use dispos’d,  
 His to enclose, and yours to be enclos’d,  
 Nor could another in your room have been,  
 Except an emptiness had come between.’

20

The comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all 30 resemblances too far behind it:—

‘ And as the Indies were not found before  
 Those rich perfumes which from the happy shore  
 The winds upon their balmy wings convey’d,  
 Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray’d;  
 So by your counsels we are brought to view  
 A new and undiscovered world in you.’

There is another comparison, for there is little else in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain prosaic meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obscurity for its magnificence:—

How strangely active are the arts of peace,  
 Whose restless motions less than wars do cease:  
 Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise;  
 And war more force, but not more pains employs:  
 Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,  
 That, like the earth's, it leaves our sense behind,  
 While you so smoothly turn and rowl our sphere,  
 That rapid motion does but rest appear.  
 For as in nature's swiftness, with the throng  
 Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,  
 All seems at rest to the deluded eye,  
 Mov'd by the soul of the same harmony:  
 So carry'd on by our unwearyed care,  
 We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.'

To this succeed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's first attempt at those penetrating remarks on human nature for which he seems to have been peculiarly formed:—

Let envy then those crimes within you see,  
 From which the happy never must be free;  
 Envy that does with misery reside,  
 The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride.'

Into this poem he seems to have collected all his powers, and after this he did not often bring upon his anvil such stubborn and unmalleable thoughts; but, as a specimen of his abilities to unite the most unsociable matter, he has concluded with lines of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning:—

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,  
 Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.  
 Thus heavenly bodies do our time beget,  
 And measure change, but share no part of it:  
 And still it shall without a weight increase,  
 Like this new year, whose motions never cease.

For since the glorious course you have begun  
 Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,  
 It must both weightless and immortal prove,  
 Because the centre of it is above.'

In the 'Annus Mirabilis' he returned to the quatrain, which from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this experience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its difficulty. This is one of his greatest attempts. He had subjects equal to his abilities, a great naval war and the Fire of London. Battles have always been described in heroic 10 poetry, but a sea-fight and artillery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets describe them, for they borrow everything from their predecessors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern war or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had already possession of those dreadful images: Waller had described a sea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels. 20

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not fully answer the expectation raised by such subjects and such a writer. With the stanza of Davenant he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis and incidental disquisition, and stops his narrative for a wise remark.

The general fault is that he affords more sentiment than description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, 'Orbem jam totum,' &c. 30

Of the king collecting his navy, he says:—

‘It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,  
His awful summons they so soon obey;  
So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,  
And so to pasture follow through the sea.’

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added the two latter in burlesque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolical, but certainly in a mode totally different?—

10 ‘To see this fleet upon the ocean move,  
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;  
And heaven, as if there wanted lights above,  
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.’

The description of the attempt at Bergen will afford a very complete specimen of the descriptions in this poem:—

‘And now approach’d their fleet from India, fraught  
With all the riches of the rising sun:  
And precious sand from southern climates brought,  
The fatal regions where the war begun.

20 Like hunted castors, conscious of their store,  
Their way-laid wealth to Norway’s coast they bring:  
Then first the North’s cold bosom spices bore,  
And winter brooded on the eastern spring.

By the rich scent we found our perfum’d prey,  
Which, flank’d with rocks, did close in covert lie;  
And round about their murdering cannon lay,  
At once to threaten and invite the eye.

Fiercer than cannon, and than rocks more hard,  
The English undertake th’ unequal war:  
30 Seven ships alone, by which the port is barr’d,  
Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare.

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those:  
These fain would keep, and those more fain enjoy:  
And to such height their frantic passion grows,  
That what both love, both hazard to destroy:  
Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,  
And now their odours arm’d against them fly.  
Some preciously by shatter’d porcelain fall,  
And some by aromatic splinters die.

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,  
In heaven's inclemency some ease we find:  
Our foes we vanquish'd by our valour left,  
And only yielded to the seas and wind.'

In this manner is the sublime too often mingled with the ridiculous. The Dutch seek a shelter for a wealthy fleet: this surely needed no illustration; yet they must fly, not like all the rest of mankind on the same occasion, but *like hunted castors*; and they might with strict propriety be hunted, for we winded them by our noses—their *perfumes* betrayed them.<sup>10</sup> The *Husband* and the *Lover*, though of more dignity than the Castor, are images too domestic to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry:—

'The night comes on, we eager to pursue  
The combat still, and they ashamed to leave:  
'Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,  
And doubtful moon-light did our rage deceive.<sup>20</sup>

In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,  
And loud applause of their great leader's fame:  
In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,  
And slumbering, smile at the imagin'd flame.

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tir'd and done,  
Stretch'd on their decks like weary oxen lie;  
Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,  
(Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply).

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,  
Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore:  
Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead;  
They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.<sup>30</sup>

It is a general rule in poetry that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger

with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge ; and of this kind, certainly, is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language ; ‘and certainly,’ says he, ‘as those who in a logical disputation keep to general terms would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in any poetical description would veil their ignorance.’

Let us then appeal to experience, for by experience at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit. In the battle his terms seem to have been blown away, but he deals them liberally in the dock :—

‘So here, some pick out bullets from the side,  
Some drive old *okum* thro’ each *seam* and rift:  
Their left-hand does the *caulking-iron* guide,  
The rattling *mallet* with the right they lift.  
With boiling pitch another near at hand  
(From friendly Sweden brought) the *seams instops* :  
Which, well laid o’er, the salt-sea waves withstand,  
And shake them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the *gall’d* ropes with dawby *marling* bind,  
Or sear-cloth masts with strong *tarpawling* coats :  
To try new *shrouds* one mounts into the wind,  
And one below, their ease or stiffness notes.’

I suppose here is not one term which every reader does not wish away.

His digression to the original and progress of navigation, with his prospect of the advancement which it shall receive from the Royal Society, then newly instituted, may be considered as an example seldom equalled of seasonable excursion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me discontented ; he says, that by the help of the philosophers,—

‘Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce.  
By which remotest regions are allied.’

Which he is constrained to explain in a note, *By a more exact measure of longitude*. It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured science into poetry, and have shewn, by explaining longitude, that verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy.

His description of the Fire is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it seems to raise little <sup>10</sup> emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection and now a simile, till at last he meets the King, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy, and then follows again the progress of the fire.

There are, however, in this part some passages that deserve attention, as in the beginning:—

‘The diligence of trades, and noiseful gain,  
And luxury, more late, asleep were laid;  
All was the night’s, and in her silent reign  
No sound the rest of nature did invade  
In this deep quiet’—  
20

The expression *All was the night’s* is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil’s line,—

‘*Omnia noctis erant placida composta quiete*,’—

that he might have concluded better,—

‘*Omnia noctis erant*.’

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:—

‘The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend  
With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice;  
About the fire into a dance they bend,  
And sing their Sabbath notes with feeble voice.’  
30

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and, with an event

which poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety.

From this time he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, 'to which,' says he, 'my genius never much inclined me,' merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of Harte, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of 'Aureng Zebe;' and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote 'Tyrannic Love,' and the 'State of Innocence,' he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre that we know not its effect upon the passions of an audience; but it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of night in the 'Indian Emperor,' and the rise and fall of empire in the 'Conquest of Granada,' are more frequently repeated than any lines in 'All for Love' or 'Don Sebastian.'

To search his plays for vigorous sallies and sententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute.

His dramatic labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the English Epistles of Ovid, one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the Earl of Mulgrave.

‘Absalom and Achitophel’ is a work so well known that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults; some lines are inelegant <sup>10</sup> or improper, and too many are irreligiously licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience; it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest. <sup>20</sup>

As an approach to historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet’s power; there is therefore an unpleasing disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects various in their principles but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers and strong by their supports, while the King’s friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view; but when expectation is at the height, the King makes a speech, and—

<sup>modest for</sup> ‘Henceforth a series of new times began.’ <sup>30</sup>

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass, which vanishes at once into air when the destined knight blows his horn before it?

In the second part, written by Tate, there is a long insertion, which, for poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

The 'Medal,' written upon the same principles with 'Absalom and Achitophel,' but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation; a single character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas as a series of events or multiplicity of agents. This poem, therefore, since time has left it to itself, is not much read, nor perhaps generally understood, yet it abounds with touches both of humorous and serious satire. The picture of a man whose propensions to mischief are such, that his best actions are but inability of wickedness, is very skilfully delineated and strongly coloured:—

20      'Power was his aim: but, thrown from that pretence,  
 The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,      }  
 And malice reconcil'd him to his Prince.      }  
 Him, in the anguish of his soul, he serv'd;  
 Rewarded faster still than he deserv'd;  
 Behold him now exalted into trust;  
 His counsels oft convenient, seldom just;  
 Ev'n in the most sincere advice he gave,  
 He had a grudging still to be a knave.  
 The frauds he learnt in his fanatic years,  
 Made him uneasy in his lawful gears,  
 At least as little honest as he could:  
 And, like white witches, mischievously good.  
 To this first bias, longingly, he leans;  
 And rather would be great by wicked means.'

30      The 'Threnodia,' which by a term I am afraid neither authorized nor analogical he calls 'Augustalis,' is not among his happiest productions. Its first and obvious defect is the irregularity of its metre, to which the ears of that age however were accustomed. What is worse, it has neither tender-

ness nor dignity, it is neither magnificent nor pathetic. He seems to look round him for images which he cannot find, and what he has he distorts by endeavouring to enlarge them. 'He is,' he says, 'petrified with grief'; but the marble sometimes relents and trickles in a joke:—

10

'The sons of art all med'cines try'd,  
And every noble remedy apply'd;  
With emulation each assay'd  
His utmost skill; *nay, more, they pray'd:*  
Was never losing game with better conduct play'd.'

10

He had been a little inclined to merriment before upon the prayers of a nation for their dying sovereign, nor was he serious enough to keep heathen fables out of his religion:—

'With him th' innumerable crowd of armed prayers  
Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud;  
*The first well-meaning rude petitioners,*  
All for his life assail'd the throne,  
All would have brib'd the skies by offering up their own.  
So great a throng not heaven itself could bar;  
'Twas almost borne by force *as in the giants' war.*  
The prayers, at least, for his reprieve were heard;  
His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.'

20

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendour without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyric or elegiac poetry. His poem 'On the Death of Mrs. Killigrew' is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of 30 enthusiasm. *Fervet immensusque ruit.* All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond; the gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendour of the second, there are passages which would have

dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another:—

‘From harmony, from heavenly harmony,

This universal frame began:

When nature underneath a heap

Of jarring atoms lay,

And could not heave her head,

The tuneful voice was heard from high,

Arise, ye more than dead.

Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,

In order to their stations leap,

And music’s power obey.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,

This universal frame began:

From harmony to harmony

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,

The diapason closing full in man.’

The conclusion is likewise striking, but it includes an image so awful in itself, that it can owe little to poetry; and I could wish the antithesis of *music untuning* had found some other place:—

‘As from the power of sacred lays

The spheres began to move,

And stung the great Creator’s praise,

To all the bless’d above:

So when the last and dreadful hour

This crumbling pageant shall devour,

The trumpet shall be heard on high

The dead shall live, the living die,

And music shall untune the sky.’

Of his skill in elegy he has given a specimen in his ‘Eleonora,’ of which the following lines discover their author:—

‘Though all these rare endowments of the mind

Were in a narrow space of life confin’d,

The figure was with full perfection crown’d;

Though not so large an orb, as truly round:

As when in glory, through the public place,

The spoils of conquer’d nations were to pass,

And but one day for triumph was allow’d.

The consul was constrain’d his pomp to crowd;

And so the swift procession hurry'd on,  
 That all, though not distinctly, might be shown :  
 So in the straighten'd bounds of life confin'd,  
 She gave but glimpses of her glorious mind :  
 And multitudes of virtues pass'd along,  
 Each pressing foremost in the mighty throng,  
 Ambitious to be seen, and then make room  
 For greater multitudes that were to come.  
 Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away ;  
 Moments were precious in so short a stay.  
 The haste of heaven to have her was so great  
 That some were single acts, though each compleat ; }  
 And every act stood ready to repeat.'

10

This piece, however, is not without its faults ; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented :

As when some great and gracious monarch dies,  
 Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs rise,  
 Among the sad attendants ; then the sound }  
 Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,  
 Through town and country, till the dreadful blast  
 Is blown to distant colonies at last,  
 Who then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain, }  
 For his long life, and for his happy reign :  
 So slowly, by degrees, unwilling fame }  
 Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim, }  
 Till public as the loss the news became.'

20

This is little better than to say in praise of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree ; or of a brook, that it waters a garden as a river waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates ; the praise being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect.

The 'Religio Laici,' which borrows its title from the 'Religio Medici' of Browne, is almost the only work of

Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion ; in this, therefore, it might be hoped that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical : he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation :—

‘ And this unpolish’d rugged verse I chose,  
As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.’

This, however, is a composition of great excellence in its kind, in which the familiar is very properly diversified with the solemn, and the grave with the humorous ; in which metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of argument ; nor will it be easy to find another example equally happy of this middle kind of writing, which though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others, and neither towers to the skies, nor creeps along the ground.

Of the same kind, or not far distant from it, is the ‘ Hind and Panther,’ the longest of all Dryden’s original poems ; an allegory intended to comprise and to decide the controversy between the Romanists and Protestants. The scheme 20 of the work is injudicious and incommodious ; for what can be more absurd than that one beast should counsel another to rest her faith upon a pope and council ? He seems well enough skilled in the usual topics of argument, endeavours to show the necessity of an infallible judge, and reproaches the Reformers with want of unity ; but is weak enough to ask, why, since we see without knowing how, we may not have an infallible judge without knowing where.

The Hind at one time is afraid to drink at the common brook, because she may be worried ; but walking home with 30 the Panther, talks by the way of the Nicene Fathers, and at last declares herself to be the Catholic Church.

This absurdity was very properly ridiculed in the ‘ City Mouse and Country Mouse’ of Montague and Prior ; and in the detection and censure of the incongruity of the fiction

chiefly consists the value of their performance, which, whatever reputation it might obtain by the help of temporary passions, seems to readers almost a century distant not very forcible or animated.

Pope, whose judgment was perhaps a little bribed by the subject, used to mention this poem as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification. It was indeed written when he had completely formed his manner, and may be supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph:—

10

‘A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang’d,  
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang’d;  
Without unspotted, innocent within,  
She fear’d no danger, for she knew no sin.  
Yet she had oft been chas’d with horns and hounds  
And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds  
Aim’d at her heart; was often forc’d to fly,  
And doom’d to death, though fated not to die.’

20

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, *to give the majestic turn of heroic poesy*; and perhaps he might have executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the wolf, is not very heroically majestic:—

30

‘More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race  
Appear with belly gaunt and famish’d face; }  
Never was so deform’d a beast of grace.  
His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,  
Close clapp’d for shame; but his rough crest he rears. }  
And pricks up his predestinating ears.’ }  
}

His general character of the other sorts of beasts that never go to church, though sprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroic poesy:—

These are the chief; to number o'er the rest,  
And stand, like Adam, naming every beast,  
Were weary work; nor will the muse describe  
A slimy-born and sun-begotten tribe,  
Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,  
In fields their sullen conventicles found,  
10 These gross, half-animated, lumps I leave;  
Nor can I think what thoughts they can conceive;  
But, if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher  
Than matter, put in motion, may aspire;  
Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay;  
So drossy, so divisible are they,  
As would but serve pure bodies for allay: }  
Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things  
As only buzz to heaven with evening wings;  
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance;  
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance.  
20 They know not beings, and but hate a name;  
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.'

One more instance, and that taken from the narrative part, where style was more in his choice, will shew how steadily he kept his resolution of heroic dignity:—

For when the herd, suffic'd, did late repair  
To ferney heaths, and to their forest laire,  
She made a mannerly excuse to stay,  
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way:  
That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk  
30 Might help her to beguile the tedious walk.  
With much good-will the motion was embrac'd,  
To chat awhile on their adventures past:  
Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot  
Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the plot.  
Yet, wondering how of late she grew estrang'd,  
Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance chang'd.  
She thought this hour th' occasion would present  
To learn her secret cause of discontent,  
Which well she hop'd, might be with ease redress'd,  
Considering her a well-bred civil beast,  
40 And more a gentlewoman than the rest. }

After some common talk what rumours ran,  
The lady of the spotted muff began.

The second and third parts he professes to have reduced to diction more familiar and more suitable to dispute and conversation: the difference is not, however, very easily perceived; the first has familiar, and the two others have sonorous lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the king is now Cæsar, and now the lion; and the name Pan is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made are now become obscure, and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention, and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety and the subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

In the poem on 'The birth of the Prince of Wales' nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that insensibility of the precipice on which the King was then standing, which the Laureate apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from Court, and made him again a playwright and translator.

Of Juvenal there had been a translation by Stapylton, and

another by Holyday: neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more smooth, and Holyday's is more esteemed for the learning of his notes. A new version was proposed to the poets of that time, and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main design was conducted by Dryden, whose reputation was such that no man was unwilling to serve the Muses under him.

The general character of this translation will be given, when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected, but his grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated, except Creech, who undertook the thirteenth satire. It is therefore perhaps possible to give a better representation of that great satirist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden says that he once translated it at school, but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shewn how well he was qualified by his version of the 'Pollio,' and two episodes, one of 'Nisus and Euryalus,' the other of 'Mezentius and Lausus.'

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative

excellence of Homer is elevation and comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendour of diction. The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn ; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the 'Georgics' and the 'Æneid' should be much delighted with any version.

All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great ; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different editions of his author, and another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison.

20

The hopes of the public were not disappointed. He produced, says Pope, 'the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language.' It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it ; but his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

His criticism extends only to the Preface, 'Pastorals,' and 'Georgics' ; and, as he professes, to give his antagonist an opportunity of reprisal, he has added his own version of the first and fourth 'Pastorals,' and the first 'Georgic.' The world has forgotten his book ; but since his attempt has

given him a place in literary history, I will preserve a specimen of his criticism, by inserting his remarks on the invocation before the first 'Georgic,' and of his poetry, by annexing his own version.

• What makes a plenteous harvest, when to turn  
The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn?'—Ver. 1.

• It's *unlucky*, they say, *to stumble at the threshold*, but what has a *plenteous harvest* to do here? Virgil would not pretend to prescribe *rules* for that which depends not on the *husbandman's* care, but the *disposition of Heaven* altogether. Indeed, the *plenteous crop* depends somewhat on the *good method of tillage*, and where the *land's* ill manur'd, the *corn*, without a miracle, can be but *indifferent*; but the *harvest* may be *good*, which is its *properest* epithet, though the *husbandman's* skill were never so *indifferent*. The next *sentence* is *too literal*, and *when to plough* had been Virgil's meaning, and intelligible to everybody; and *when to sow the corn*, is a needless *addition*.

20 "The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine,  
And when to geld the lambs, and sheer the swine."—Ver. 3.

would as well have fallen under the *cura boum, qui cultus habendo sit pecori*, as Mr. D.'s *deduction* of particulars.

"The birth and genius of the frugal bee,  
I sing, Mæccenas, and I sing to thee."—Ver. 5.

But where did *experiencia* ever signify *birth and genius*? or what ground was there for such a *figure* in this place? How much more manly is Mr. Ogylby's version!

30 "What makes rich grounds, in what celestial signs  
'Tis good to plough, and marry elms with vines;  
What best fits cattle, what with sheep agrees,  
And several arts improving frugal bees;  
I sing, Mæccenas."

Which four lines, though faulty enough, are yet much more to the purpose than Mr. D.'s six.

“From fields and mountains to my song repair.”—Ver. 22.

For *patrium linquens nemus, saltusque Lycae*.—Very well explained!

“Inventor, Pallas, of the fattening oil,

Thou founder of the plough, and ploughman’s toil!”

Ver. 23, 24.

Written as if *these* had been Pallas’s *invention*. The *ploughman’s toil’s* impertinent.

“. . . The shroud-like cypress . . .”—Ver. 25.

Why *shroud-like*? Is a *cypress* pulled up by the *roots*, which 10 to the *sculpture* in the *last Eclogue* fills *Silvanus’s* hand with, so very like a *shroud*? Or did not Mr. D. think of that kind of *cypress* us’d often for *scarves and hatbands* at funerals formerly, or for *widows’ vails, &c.*? If so, ’twas a *deep good thought*.

“. . . . . . . That wear

The rural honours, and increase the year.”—Ver. 26.

What’s meant by *increasing the year*? Did the *gods or goddesses* add more *months, or days, or hours* to it? Or how can *arva tueri* signify to *wear rural honours*? Is this to 20 *translate, or abuse an author*? The next *couplet* are borrowed from *Ogylby*, I suppose, because *less to the purpose* than ordinary:—

“The patron of the world, and Rome’s peculiar guard.”—Ver. 33.

*Idle*, and none of *Virgil’s*, no more than the sense of the *precedent couplet*; so again, he *interpolates Virgil with that and the round circle of the year to guide powerful of blessings, which thou strew’st around*. A ridiculous Latinism, and an *impertinent addition*; indeed the whole *period* is but one piece of *absurdity and nonsense*, as those who lay it with the *original* 30 must find.

“And Neptune shall resign the fasces of the sea.”

Was he *consul* or *dictator* there?

“And wat’ry virgins for thy bed shall strive.”—Ver. 42, 43.

Both absurd *interpolations*.

“Where in the void of heaven a place is free.

“Ah! happy, D—n, were that place for thee.”—Ver. 47, 48.

But where is *that void*? Or what does our *translator* mean by it? He knows what Ovid says *God* did to prevent such a *void* in heaven; perhaps this was then forgotten: but Virgil talks more sensibly.

“The scorpion ready to receive thy laws.”—Ver. 49.

No, he would not then have *gotten out of his way* so fast.

“Though Proserpine affects her silent seat.”—Ver. 56.

What made *her* then so *angry* with Ascalaphus, for preventing her return? She was now mus’d to *Patience* under the *determinations of Fate*, rather than fond of her *residence*.

“Pity the poet’s and the plough-man’s cares,  
Interest thy greatness in our mean affairs,  
And use thyself betimes to hear our prayers.”

Ver. 61-63.

Which is such a wretched *perversion* of Virgil’s *noble thought* as Vicars would have blushed at; but Mr. Ogylby makes us some amends by his better lines:—

“O wheresoe’er thou art, from thence incline,  
And grant assistance to my bold design!  
Pity, with me, poor husbandmen’s affairs,  
And now, as if translated, hear our prayers.”

This is *sense* and *to the purpose*: the other, poor *mistaken stuff*.

Such were the strictures of Milbourne, who found few abettors; and of whom it may be reasonably imagined, that many who favoured his design were ashamed of his insolence.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more

coolly examined, and found, like all others, to be sometimes erroneous and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the 'Æneid,' which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

With not much better success, Trapp, when his Tragedy and his 'Prelections' had given him reputation, attempted<sup>1</sup> another blank version of the 'Æneid'; to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the 'Eclogues' and 'Georgics.' His book may continue its existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of school-boys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the mellifluence of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidious comparison by opposing one<sup>20</sup> passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and to write one more vigorous in its place; to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version: but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critic may commend. Works of imagination excel by their<sup>30</sup> allurement and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain which the reader throws away. He only is the master who keeps

<sup>1</sup> 1718.

the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predomination I will consent that Dryden should be tried; of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

10 His last work was his 'Fables,' in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *rifaccimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of Boiardo has been new-dressed by Domenichi and Berni. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the 'Cock' seems hardly worth revival; and the story of 'Palamon and Arcite,' containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to 20 pass without censure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general preface, and in a poetical dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces borrowed from Boccace, 'Sigismunda' may be defended by the celebrity of the story. 'Theodore and Honoria,' though it contains not much moral, yet afforded opportunities of striking description. And 'Cymon' was formerly a tale of such reputation, that, at the revival of letters, it was translated into Latin by one of the Beroalds.

30 Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had

written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

One composition must however be distinguished. The 'Ode for St. Cecilia's Day,' perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the 'Ode on Killigrew' it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole; but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it does not want its negligences: some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; the music of Timotheus, which *raised a mortal to the skies*, had only a metaphorical power; that of Cecilia, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect: the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

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IN a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented he studied rather than felt, and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but 30 meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much

acquainted; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society and confused in the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of love may contribute to the explanation of his character:—

‘Love various minds does variously inspire;  
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,  
Like that of incense on the altar laid;  
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade;  
A fire which every windy passion blows,  
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows.’

Dryden’s was not one of the *gentle bosoms*: love, as it subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved, and wishing only for correspondent kindness; such love as shuts out all other interest; the love of the golden age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated  
20 revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic; and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on Otway with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play *there was nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he  
30 found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart, than a servile submission to an injudicious audience that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving natural sentiments, or impressing new appearances of things; sentences

were readier at his call than images ; he could more easily fill the ear with some splendid novelty, than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination ; and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingence ; these he discusses in the language of the school with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are not always understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side : he was now no longer at a loss ; he had always objections and solutions at command : *verbaque provisam rem*—give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprises ;<sup>20</sup> from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate he seems to have had not from nature but from other poets ; if not always as a plagiary, at least as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle ; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense,<sup>30</sup> which he knew ; as,

‘ Move swiftly, sun, and fly a lover’s pace,  
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race.  
Amariel flies  
To guard thee from the demons of the air ;

My flaming sword above them to display,  
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day.'

And sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps he was not conscious :—

'Then we upon our orb's last verge shall go,  
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;  
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,  
And on the lunar world securely pry.'

These lines have no meaning ; but may we not say, in imitation of Cowley on another book,—

“Tis so like *sense* 'twill serve the turn as well ?'

This endeavour after the grand and the new produced many sentiments either great or bulky, and many images either just or splendid :—

‘I am as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran. }  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

—Tis but because the Living death ne'er knew,  
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new:  
Let me th' experiment before you try,  
I'll shew you first how easy 'tis to die.

—There with a forest of their darts he strove,  
And stood like *Capaneus* defying Jove ;  
With his broad sword the boldest beating down,  
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,  
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book  
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay ;  
For if you give it burial, there it takes  
Possession of your earth ;  
If burnt; and scatter'd in the air, the winds  
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty,  
And spread me o'er your clime ; for where one atom  
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.'

Of these quotations the two first may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of such selection there is no end. I will add only a few more passages, of which the first, though it may perhaps not be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble :—

‘No, there is a necessity in fate,  
Why still the brave bold man is fortunate;  
He keeps his object ever full in sight,  
And that assurance holds him firm and right;  
True, ‘tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,  
But right before there is no precipice;  
Fear makes men look aside, and so their footing miss.’

10

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant, the second magnificent; whether either be just, let the reader judge :—

‘What precious drops are these,  
Which silently each other’s track pursue,  
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew?’

—Resign your castle—

—Enter, brave Sir; for when you speak the word,  
The gates shall open of their own accord;  
The genius of the place its Lord shall meet,  
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.’

20

These bursts of extravagance Dryden calls the *Dalilahs* of the theatre, and owns that many noisy lines of ‘Maxamin and Almanzor’ call out for vengeance upon him; ‘but I knew,’ says he, ‘that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them.’ There is surely reason to suspect that he pleased himself as well as his audience, and that these, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

30

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes, like almost all other poets, very frequent use of mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantic ostentation; as when, in translating Virgil, he says, *tack to the*

*larboard*, and *veer starboard*; and talks in another work of *virtue spooming before the wind*. His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:—

‘They Nature’s king through Nature’s optics view’d;  
Revers’d they view’d Him lessen’d to their eyes.’

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object.

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression?—

‘A hollow crystal pyramid He takes,  
In firmamental waters dipp’d above,  
Of this a broad *extinguisher* He makes,  
And *hoods* the flames that to their quarry strove.’

When he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal, he intermingles this image:—

‘When rattling bones together fly,  
From the four quarters of the sky.’

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his Elegy on Cromwell:—

‘No sooner was the Frenchman’s cause embrac’d,  
Than the *light Monsieur* the *grave Don* outweigh’d;  
His fortune turn’d the scale—?’

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to shew, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words which had then crept into conversation; such as *fraîcheur* for *coolness*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no

rigid judge of his own pages; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection, nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley, and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself, but while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient he did not stop to make better, and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written he dismissed from his thoughts, and I believe there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication.

The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity, but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.

What can be said of his versification will be little more than a dilatation of the praise given it by Pope:—

‘Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.’

Some improvements had been already made in English numbers, but the full force of our language was not yet felt; the verse that was smooth was commonly feeble. If Cowley<sup>30</sup> had sometimes a finished line, he had it by chance. Dryden knew how to choose the flowing and the sonorous words; to vary the pauses, and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of his metre.

Of triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it. The triplet has long subsisted among us. Dryden seems not to have traced it higher than to Chapman's 'Homer,' but it is to be found in Phaer's 'Virgil,' written in the reign of Mary, and in Hall's 'Satires,' published five years before the death of Elizabeth.

The Alexandrine was, I believe, first used by Spenser for the sake of closing his stanza with a fuller sound. We had a longer measure of fourteen syllables, into which the 'Æneid' was translated by Phaer, and other works of the ancients by other writers, of which Chapman's 'Iliad' was, I believe, the last.

The two first lines of Phaer's third 'Æneid' will exemplify this measure:—

'When Asia's state was overthrown, and Priam's kingdom stout,  
All guiltless, by the power of gods above was rooted out.'

As these lines had their break, or *cæsura*, always at the eighth syllable, it was thought in time commodious to divide them; and quatrains of lines, alternately consisting of eight and six syllables, make the most soft and pleasing of our lyric measures; as,—

'Relentless time, destroying power,  
Which stone and brass obey,  
Who giv'st to every flying hour  
To work some new decay.'

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as Drayton's 'Polyolbion,' were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroic lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

The triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. Swift always censured them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety it is to be considered

that the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verse is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule ; a rule, however, lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and spondees differently combined ; the English heroic admits of acute or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into seven feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables ; but the English Alexandrine 10 breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllables more than he expected.

The effect of the triplet is the same : the ear has been accustomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet, but is on a sudden surprised with three rhymes together, to which the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces in the margins. Surely there is something unskilful in the necessity of such mechanical direction.

Considering the metrical art simply as a science, and con- 20sequently excluding all casualty, we must allow that triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by caprice, are interruptions of that constancy to which science aspires. And though the variety which they produce may very justly be desired, yet to make our poetry exact there ought to be some stated mode of admitting them.

But till some such regulation can be formed, I wish them still to be retained in their present state. They are sometimes grateful to the reader, and sometimes convenient to the poet. Fenton was of opinion that Dryden was too liberal 30 and Pope too sparing in their use.

The rhymes of Dryden are commonly just, and he valued himself for his readiness in finding them ; but he is sometimes open to objection.

It is the common practice of our poets to end the second line with a weak or grave syllable:—

‘Together o'er the Alps methinks we fly,  
Fill'd with ideas of fair *Italy*! ’

Dryden sometimes puts the weak rhyme in the first:—

‘Laugh all the powers that favour *tyranny*,  
And all the standing army of the sky.’

Sometimes he concludes a period or a paragraph with the first line of a couplet, which, though the French seem to do so it without irregularity, always displeases in English poetry.

The Alexandrine, though much his favourite, is not always very diligently fabricated by him. It invariably requires a break at the sixth syllable, a rule which the modern French poets never violate, but which Dryden sometimes neglected:—

‘And with paternal thunder vindicates his throne.’

Of Dryden’s works it was said by Pope, that ‘he could select from them better specimens of every mode of poetry than any other English writer could supply.’ Perhaps no nation ever produced a writer that enriched his language with such variety of models. To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught *sapere et fari*, to think naturally and express forcibly. Though Davis has reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument with poetry. He showed us the true bounds of a translator’s liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*; ‘He found it brick, and he left it marble.’

<sup>1</sup> Pope: Epistle to Jervas.

THE invocation before the 'Georgics' is here inserted from Mr. Milbourne's version, that according to his own proposal, his verses may be compared with those which he censures:—

• What makes the richest *tilth*, beneath what signs  
To *plough*, and when to match your *elms* and *vines*;  
What care with *flocks* and what with *herds* agrees,  
And all the management of frugal *bees*,  
I sing, *Mæcenas*! Ye immensely clear,  
Vast orbs of light which guide the rolling year;  
10  
*Bacchus*, and mother *Ceres*, if by you  
We fat'ning *corn* for hungry *mast* pursue,  
If, taught by you, we first the *cluster* prest,  
And *thin cold streams* with *spritely juice* refresh,  
Ye *fawns* the present *numens* of the field,  
*Wood nymphs* and *fawns*, your kind assistance yield,  
Your gifts I sing! and thou, at whose fear'd stroke  
From rending earth the fiery *courser* broke,  
Great *Neptune*, O assist my artful song!  
20  
And thou to whom the woods and groves belong,  
Whose snowy heifers on her flow'ry plains  
In mighty herds the *Cæan Isle* maintains!  
*Pan*, happy shepherd, if thy cares divine,  
E'er to improve thy *Mænalus* incline;  
Leave thy *Lycean wood* and *native grove*,  
And with thy lucky smiles our work approve!  
Be *Pallas* too, sweet oil's inventor, kind;  
And he, who first the crooked plough design'd!  
*Sylvanus*, god of all the woods appear,  
Whose hands a new-drawn tender *cypress* bear!  
30  
Ye *gods* and *goddesses* who e'er with love,  
Would guard our pastures, and our fields improve!  
You, who new plants from unsown lands supply;  
And with condensing clouds obscure the sky,  
And drop 'em softly thence in fruitful showers,  
Assist my enterprise, ye gentler powers!

And thou, great *Cæsar*! though we know not yet  
Among what gods thou'l fix thy lofty seat,  
Whether thou'l be the kind *tutelar god*  
Of thy own *Rome*; or with thy awful nod,  
Guide the vast world, while thy great hand shall bear  
The fruits and seasons of the turning year,  
And thy bright brows thy mother's myrtles wear. 40

Whether thou'l all the boundless ocean sway,  
 And sea-men only to thyself shall pray,  
*Thule*, the farthest island, kneel to thee,  
 And, that thou mayst her son by marriage be,  
*Tethys* will for the happy purchase yield  
 To make a *downy* of her wat'ry field;  
 Whether thou'l add to heaven a *brighter sign*,  
 And o'er the *summer months* serenely shine;  
 Where between *Cancer* and *Erigone*,  
 There yet remains a spacious *room* for thee.  
 Where the hot *Scorpion* too his arms declines,  
 And more to thee than half his *arch* resigns;  
 Whate'er thou'l be; for sure the realms below  
 No just pretence to thy command can show:  
 No such ambition sways thy vast desires,  
 Though *Greece* her own *Elysian fields* admires.  
 And now, at last, contented *Proserpine*  
 Can all her mother's earnest prayers decline.  
 Whate'er thou'l be, O guide our gentle course,  
 And with thy smiles our bold attempts enforce;  
 With me th' unknowing *rustics*' wants relieve,  
 And, though on earth, our sacred vows receive!

20

MR. DRYDEN, having received from Rymer his 'Remarks on the Tragedies of the last Age,' wrote observations on the blank leaves; which, having been in the possession of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the public, that no particle of Dryden may be lost.

' That we may the less wonder why pity and terror are not now the only springs on which our tragedies move, and that 30 Shakspeare may be more excused, Rapin confesses that the French tragedies now all run on the *tendre*; and gives the reason, because love is the passion which most predominates in our souls, and that therefore the passions represented become insipid, unless they are conformable to the thoughts of the audience. But it is to be concluded that this passion works not now amongst the French so strongly as the other two did amongst the ancients. Amongst us, who have a

stronger genius for writing, the operations from the writing are much stronger : for the raising of Shakspeare's passions is more from the excellency of the words and thoughts, than the justness of the occasion ; and if he has been able to pick single occasions, he has never founded the whole reasonably; yet, by the genius of poetry in writing, he has succeeded.

' Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that is, to the words and discourse of a tragedy, than Aristotle has done, who places them in the last rank of beauties ; perhaps only last in order, because they are the last product of the design of the 10 disposition or connection of its parts ; of the characters, of the manners of those characters, and of the thoughts proceeding from those manners. Rapin's words are remarkable : 'Tis not the admirable intrigue, the surprising events, and extraordinary incidents, that make the beauty of a tragedy; 'tis the discourses, when they are natural and passionate : so are Shakspeare's.

' The parts of a poem, tragic or heroic, are,

' 1. The fable itself.

' 2. The order or manner of its contrivance in relation of 20 the parts to the whole.

' 3. The manners, or decency of the characters, in speaking or acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shewn by the poet.

' 4. The thoughts which express the manners.

' 5. The words which express those thoughts.

' In the last of these, Homer excels Virgil ; Virgil all other ancient poets ; and Shakspeare all modern poets.

' For the second of these, the order : the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all 30 just and natural ; so that that part, e. g. which is the middle, could not naturally be the beginning or end, and so of the rest ; all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be raised, certainly this

author follows Aristotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides' example; but joy may be raised too, and that doubly, either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at last fortunate; or perhaps indignation, to see wickedness prosperous and goodness depressed: both these may be profitable to the end of tragedy, reformation of manners; but the last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience; though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of this kind in the second form.

10 'He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our English poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this manner. Either by yielding to him the greatest part of what he contends for, which consists in this, that the *μύθος*, i. e. the design and conduct of it, is more conducing in the Greeks to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle and he propose, namely, to cause terror and pity; yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English poets.

20 'But the answerer ought to prove two things: first, that the fable is not the greatest master-piece of a tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

'Secondly, that other ends as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, which were not in the Greek.

' Aristotle places the fable first; not *quoad dignitatem, sed quoad fundamentum*: for a fable, never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, pity and terror, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, and words are suitable.

30 'So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides: and this he has offered at, in some measure; but, I think, a little partially to the ancients.

'For the fable itself; 'tis in the English more adorned with

episodes, and larger than in the Greek poets: consequently more diverting. For, if the action be but one, and that plain, without any counter-turn of design or episode, i. e. under-plot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, which have both an under-plot and a turned design, which keeps the audience in expectation of the catastrophe? whereas in the Greek poets we see through the whole design at first.

‘For the characters, they are neither so many nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakspeare and Fletcher; only they are more adapted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle commends to us, pity and terror.

‘The manners flow from the characters, and consequently must partake of their advantages and disadvantages.

‘The thoughts and words, which are the fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more noble and more poetical in the English than in the Greek, which must be proved by comparing them, somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

‘After all, we need not yield that the English way is less conducing to move pity and terror, because they often shew 20 virtue oppressed and vice punished: where they do not both, or either, they are not to be defended.

‘And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps it may admit of dispute, whether pity and terror are either the prime, or at least the only ends of tragedy.

‘Tis not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say (what I hinted on pity and terror, 30 in the last paragraph save one), that the punishment of vice and reward of virtue are the most adequate ends of tragedy, because most conducing to good example of life. Now pity is not so easily raised for a criminal, and the ancient tragedy

always represents its chief person such, as it is for an innocent man ; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the offender is of the nature of English tragedy: contrarily, in the Greek, innocence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers ; and this was almost unknown to the ancients : so that they neither administered poetical justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we ; neither knew they the best common-place of pity, which is  
10 love.

‘ He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left us ; for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly finished what they began.

‘ My judgment on this piece is this, that it is extremely learned ; but that the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets ; that all writers ought to study this critique as the best account I have ever seen of the ancients ; that the model of tragedy he has here given is excellent, and extreme correct ; but that it is not the only model of all  
20 tragedy, because it is too much circumscribed in plot, characters, &c. ; and, lastly, that we may be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them the preference with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

‘ Want of method in this excellent treatise makes the thoughts of the author sometimes obscure.

‘ His meaning, that pity and terror are to be moved is, that they are to be moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure and instruction.

‘ And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The  
30 chief end of the poet is to please, for his immediate reputation depends on it.

‘ The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction ; for poesy is an art, and all arts are made to profit. *Rapin.*

‘ The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those or him whom he has murdered, or who have been the occasion of the tragedy. The terror is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal, who, if he be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied; if altogether innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

‘ Another obscurity is, where he says Sophocles perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor; that is, he meant, three kinds of action; one company singing or another playing on the music; a third dancing. 10

‘ To make a true judgment in this competition betwixt the Greek poets and the English, in tragedy:

‘ Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what he thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the means to attain the end proposed.

‘ Compare the Greek and English tragic poets justly and without partiality, according to those rules.

‘ Then, secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its 20 beauties; and whether he, having not seen any others but those of Sophocles, Euripides, &c., had or truly could determine what all the excellencies of tragedy are, and wherein they consist.

‘ Next shew in what ancient tragedy was deficient; for example, in the narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons, and try whether that be not a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their excellency was so great, when the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very easy to do. 30

‘ Then make a judgment on what the English have added to their beauties; as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions; as, namely, that of love, scarce touched on by the ancients, except in this one example of *Phædra*,

cited by Mr. Rymer; and in that how short they were of Fletcher!

‘ Prove also that love, being an heroic passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, because of the example alleged of Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, &c.

‘ To return to the beginning of this enquiry; consider if pity and terror be enough for tragedy to move: and I believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform manners by a delightful representation of human life in great persons by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved, as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue, and hatred to vice, by shewing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other; at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, though it be shewn unfortunate; and vice detestable, though it be shewn triumphant.

‘ If, then, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terror, though good means, are not the only. For all the passions, in their turns, are to be set in a ferment: as joy, anger, love, fear, are to be used as the poet’s common-places; and a general concernment for the principal actors is to be raised, by making them appear such in their characters, their words, and actions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.

‘ And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity comprehends this concernment for the good, and terror includes detestation for the bad, then let us consider whether the English have not answered this end of tragedy, as well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

‘ And here Mr. Rymer’s objections against these plays are to be impartially weighed, that we may see whether they

are of weight enough to turn the balance against our countrymen.

‘Tis evident those plays which he arraigns have moved both those passions in a high degree upon the stage.

‘To give the glory of this away from the poet, and to place it upon the actors, seems unjust.

‘One reason is, because whatever actors they have found, the event has been the same, that is, the same passions have been always moved, which shews that there is something of force and merit in the plays themselves conducing to the design of raising these two passions: and suppose them ever to have been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace, vigour, and more life upon the stage, but cannot give it wholly where it is not first. But, secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never seen them acted, if they have not found these two passions moved within them; and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. Rymer’s prejudice will take off his single testimony.

‘This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this appeal; as if one man says ‘tis night, the rest of the world conclude it to be day; there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

‘If he urge that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to prove this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to raise those passions; but experience proves against him, that these means which they have used have been successful, and have produced them.

‘And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this, that Shakspeare and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

‘And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer reason to please the Athenians than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only shews that the Athenians were a more judicious people; but the poet’s business is certainly to please the audience.

‘Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used in their plays to raise those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly: let it be granted that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to please the people by their own usual methods, but rather to reform their judgments, it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

‘The faults, which he has found in their designs, are rather wittily aggravated in many places than reasonably urged; and as much may be returned on the Greeks, by one who were as witty as himself.

20. ‘2. They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabric; only take away from the beauty of the symmetry: for example, the faults in the character of the King and No-king are not as he makes them, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accompany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of his love; so that they destroy not our pity or concernment for him: this answer may be applied to most of his objections of that kind.

‘And Rollo committing many murders, when he is answerable but for one, is too severely arraigned by him, for it adds to our horror and detestation of the criminal: and poetic justice is not neglected neither; for we stab him in our minds for every offence which he commits, and the point which the poet is to gain on the audience, is not so

much in the death of an offender as the raising an horror of his crimes.

‘That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor wholly innocent, but so participating of both as to move both pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be observed; for that were to make all tragedies too much alike, which objection he foresaw, but has not fully answered.

‘To conclude, therefore; if the plays of the ancients are more correctly plotted, ours are more beautifully written.<sup>10</sup> And if we can raise passions as high on worse foundations, it shews our genius in tragedy is greater; for in all other parts of it, the English have manifestly excelled them.’

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THE original of the following letter is preserved in the library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the public by the Reverend Dr. Vyse.

*Copy of an original letter from John Dryden, Esq., to his sons in Italy, from a MS. in the Lambeth Library, marked No. 933, p. 56.*

(*Superscribed*)

‘Al Illustrissimo Sig<sup>re</sup>  
Carlo Dryden Camariere  
d’Honore A. S. S.

‘In Roma,

‘Franca per Mantoua.

‘Sept. the 3d, our style. [1697.]

‘Dear Sons,

‘Being now at Sir William Bowyer’s in the country, I cannot write at large, because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worse than I <sup>130</sup> was in town. I am glad to find by your letter of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you

should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will enquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember, he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp; the ship is bound to Leghorn, consigned to Mr. 10 Peter and Mr. Thos. Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for in every figure of *Æneas* he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put by him into my hands: 'tis called 'The Conquest of China by the Tartars.' It will cost me six weeks' study, with the probable benefit of an hundred 20 pounds. In the meantime I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the stewards of the feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmas and Christmas, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter, but dissembling, though lawful in some cases, is not my talent; 30 yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the meantime, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured beforehand, never to be rewarded,

though the times should alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them; I hope at the same time to recover more health according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My 'Virgil' succeeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation. You know the profits might have been more, but neither my conscience nor my honour <sup>10</sup> would suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends to me amongst my enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

'Your most affectionate father,  
JOHN DRYDEN.'



THE LIFE OF POPE.

THE LIFE OF POPE

## POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of 'gentle blood;' that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esq., of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles I.; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to shew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the Exchange was never discovered, till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linen-draper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate, but is said to have shewn remarkable gentleness and 20 sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice, when he was young, was so pleasing that he was called in fondness the 'little Nightingale.'

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became

a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

When he was about eight he was placed in Hampshire under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogilby's 'Homer,' and Sandys's 'Ovid.' Ogilby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the 'Iliad,' that English poetry owed much of its present beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was considerable, he was removed to a school at Twyford, near Winchester, and again to another school about Hyde-park Corner; from which he used sometimes to stroll to the playhouse, and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's 'Iliad,' with 20 some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his school-fellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Ajax.

At the two last schools he used to represent himself as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him, and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a ~~lampoon~~ <sup>comedy</sup>. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the 'Metamorphoses.' If he kept the same proportion in his other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss was great.

30. He tells of himself, in his poems, that 'he lisp'd in numbers;' and used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of fiction it might have been said of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle, 'the bees swarmed about his mouth.'

About the time of the Revolution his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of popish prosperity, quitted his trade, and retired to Binfield, in Windsor Forest, with about twenty thousand pounds; for which, being conscientiously determined not to entrust it to the Government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expenses required; and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was 10 about twelve years old; and there he had for a few months the assistance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of Tully's 'Offices.' How Mr. Deane could spend, with a boy who had translated so much of Ovid, some months over a small part of Tully's 'Offices,' it is now vain to enquire.

Of a youth so successfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally desired; but curiosity must be contented with confused, imperfect, and sometimes improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage 20 from external help, resolved thenceforward to direct himself, and at twelve formed a plan of study which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say, 'These are good rhymes.'

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model 30 to be studied, and was impressed with such veneration for his instructor, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve; so early must he therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his 'Ode on Solitude,' written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at the same age.

10 His time was now spent wholly in reading and writing. As he read the Classics, he amused himself with translating them; and at fourteen made a version of the first book of the 'Thebais,' which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been at this time, if he had no help, a considerable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's 'Fables,' which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put 'January and May,' and the 20 'Prologue of the Wife of Bath,' into modern English. He translated likewise the 'Epistle of Sappho to Phaon' from Ovid, to complete the version, which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed.

He sometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen his poem upon 'Silence,' after Rochester's 'Nothing.' He had now formed his versification, and in the smoothness of his numbers surpassed his original: but this is a small part of his praise; he discovers such 30 acquaintance both with human life and public affairs, as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in Windsor Forest.

Next year he was desirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with

modern languages ; and removed for a time to London, that he might study French and Italian, which, as he desired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application soon despatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much use in his subsequent studies.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epic poem, with panegyrics on all the princes of Europe ; and as he confesses, 'thought himself the greatest genius that ever was.' Self-confidence is 10 the first requisite to great undertakings ; he, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to error ; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed ; 'Alcander,' the epic poem, was burnt by the persuasion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of St. Genevieve. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies it is related that he translated 20 Tully 'On Old Age,' and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read Temple's 'Essays' and 'Locke on Human Understanding.' His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious ; for his early pieces shew, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleased with himself, easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbal, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, and Secretary of State, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid

acquaintance, and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for from his first entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now<sup>1</sup> wrote his *Pastorals*, which were shewn to the poets and critics of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the *Preface*, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are distinguished among the English poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat critics with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such that he submitted some poems to his revision, and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages

defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he used to ride a-hunting in a tye-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism, and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now and then unwelcome. Pope, in his <sup>10</sup> turn, put the juvenile version of 'Statius' into his hands for correction.

Their correspondence afforded the public its first knowledge of Pope's epistolary powers, for his letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas, and she many years afterwards sold them to Curl, who inserted them<sup>1</sup> in a volume of his *Miscellanies*.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the *Pastorals*, and from him Pope received the counsel by which <sup>20</sup> he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a basis of fame; and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy, a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet, and thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began at seventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russell-<sup>30</sup> street in Covent-garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside.

<sup>1</sup> 1727.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and insatiably curious ; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having certainly excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books ; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving.  
10 Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another, and when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction ; that in the first part of this time he desired only to know, and in the second he endeavoured to judge.

The 'Pastorals,' which had been for some time handed 20 about among poets and critics, were at last printed (1709) in Tonson's 'Miscellany,' in a volume which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope.

The same year was written the 'Essay on Criticism' ; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards, and being praised by Addison in the 'Spectator' with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, 'who,' he says, 'found himself attacked, without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person instead of his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune ;

and not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity.'

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

10

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions, whether the 'Essay' will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be 'young and raw.'

'First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts, and affects 20 the dictator air, he plainly shews that at the same time he is under the rod; and while he pretends to give law to others, is a pedantic slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like schoolboys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, he is almost perpetually in the wrong.'

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks, but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages in 30 these lines:—

'There are whom Heaven has bless'd with store of wit,  
Yet want as much again to manage it;  
For wit and judgment ever are at strife.'

It is apparent that wit has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called wit, is truly judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. ‘By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated Muse, who had \* \* \* got the gout in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnably?’ This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed that Dennis had detected one of those blunders which are called ‘bulls.’ The first edition had this line:—

‘What is this wit—

Where wanted, scorn’d; and envied where acquir’d?’

‘How,’ says the critic, ‘can wit be scorn’d where it is not? Is not this a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land? The person that wants this wit may indeed be scorned, but the scorn shews the honour which the contemner has for wit.’ Of this remark Pope made the proper use by correcting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis’s criticism; it remains that justice be done to his delicacy. ‘For his acquaintance,’ says Dennis, ‘he names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means the qualification which this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critic, it being very certain that he was, like this Essayer, a very indifferent poet; he loved to be well-dressed; and I remember a little young gentleman whom Mr. Walsh used to take into his company, as a double foil to his person and capacity. Enquire between Sunninghill and Oakingham for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the God of Love, and tell me whether he be a proper author to make personal reflections? He may

extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern ; for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day. Let the person of a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous ; it being impossible that his outward form, though it be that of downright monkey, should differ so much from human shape, as his unthinking immaterial part does from human understanding.' Thus began the hostility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was suspended for a short time, never was appeased. Pope seems, at first, to have attacked him wantonly ; but though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him very often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this 'Essay' Pope declared that he did not expect the sale to be quick, because 'not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it.' The gentlemen, and the education of that time, seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thousand copies as a numerous impression.

Dennis was not his only censurer ; the zealous Papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Erasmus too studiously praised ; but to these objections he had not much regard.

The 'Essay' has been translated into French by Hamilton, author of the 'Comte de Grammont,' whose version was never printed ; by Robotham, Secretary to the King for Hanover, and by Resnel ; and commented by Dr. Warburton, 3c who has discovered in it such order and connection as was not perceived by Addison, nor, as is said, intended by the author.

Almost every poem, consisting of precepts, is so far

arbitrary and immethodical that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may easily give a reason. 'It is possible,' says Hooker, 'that by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred.' Of all homogeneous truths, at least of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever series they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, such as, when it is once shewn, shall appear natural; but if this order be reversed, another mode of connection equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming fortitude first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practised; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed prudence and justice before it, since without prudence fortitude is mad; without justice, it is mischievous.

20 As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where there is no obscurity it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the 'Spectator' was published the 'Messiah,' which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms.

It is reasonable to infer, from his Letters, that the verses on the 'Unfortunate Lady' were written about the time when his 'Essay' was published. The lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless enquiry.

30 I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an uncle, who, having given her a proper education, expected, like other guardians,

that she should make at least an equal match; and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition.

Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters <sup>10</sup> were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance; till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she bribed a woman-servant to procure her a sword, which she directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raise the lady's character, it does not appear that she had any claim to praise, nor much to compassion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long; the hour of liberty and <sup>20</sup> choice would have come in time. But her desires were too hot for delay, and she liked self-murder better than suspense.

Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as 'a false guardian'; he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed; he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after he wrote the 'Rape of the Lock', the most <sup>30</sup> airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolic of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so

much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being Secretary to King James's Queen, had followed his mistress into France, and who being the author of 'Sir Solomon Single,' a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a wit, solicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letter, C—l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended lady, who liked it well enough to shew it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired; the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness, that, in the character of 'Sir Plume,' he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true, I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison *merum sal.* Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was 'a delicious little thing,' and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for, as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised

in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. The 'Rape of the Lock' stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shewn before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce anything of such unexampled excellence. Those performances which strike with wonder, are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the public was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published the 'Temple of Fame,' which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-

two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent Motion as exhibited by Sculpture.

Of the Epistle from 'Eloisa to Abelard,' I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's 'Nut-brown Maid.' How much he has 10 surpassed Prior's work it is not necessary to mention, when perhaps it may be said with justice that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it.

20 In the next year (1713) he published 'Windsor Forest,' of which part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his Pastorals; and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins we are not told. The lines relating to the Peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lansdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is said that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why 30 should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of 'Windsor Forest'? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for having been consulted in the revisal of 'Cato,' he introduced it by a Prologue; and when Dennis published his 'Remarks,' undertook not indeed to vindicate but to revenge his friend, by a 'Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis.'

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for, says Pope, <sup>10</sup> in a letter to him, 'indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but I felt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against myself (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry).' Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the 'Guardian' the ironical <sup>20</sup> comparison between the Pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to <sup>30</sup> Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of Painting with that of Poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-

sighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter: he tried, however, how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton<sup>1</sup>, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of Lord Mansfield: if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastic verses to Jervas, which certainly shew his power as a poet, but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's Prologues, and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds if he would shew them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment, and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books<sup>1</sup>.

He therefore resolved<sup>2</sup> to try how far the favour of the public extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the 'Iliad,' with large notes.

To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work for which this expedient was employed is said to have been Dryden's 'Virgil,' and it had been tried again with great success when the 'Tatlers' were collected into volumes.

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

<sup>2</sup> Oct. 1713.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the public with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes he offered an English 'Iliad' to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received, and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking and promote his interest. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original, but proposed no means by which he might live without it; Addison recommended caution and moderation, and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be universally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor on condition of supplying, at his own expense, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription

might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner, and sold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books so little inferior to the quartos, that, by a fraud of trade, those folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in folio for two guineas a volume; of the small folio, having 10 printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in the other volumes to a thousand.

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the English 'Iliad' was printed in Holland in duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and 20 more commodious, and Lintot was compelled to contract his folio at once into a duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are therefore more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but indeed great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not 30 only his own reputation, but in some degree that of his friends who patronized his subscription, began to be frightened at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy, had his nights disturbed by

dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wished, as he said, 'that somebody would hang him'<sup>1</sup>.

This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as despatching regularly fifty verses a-day, which would shew him by an easy computation the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor, and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and some of the Tories suspected his principles because he had contributed to the 'Guardian,' which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politics were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer.<sup>20</sup> To these he made no public opposition, but in one of his letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance; and what man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural,<sup>30</sup> with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, on those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty <sup>10</sup> than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the music of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of Eobanus Hessus, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of La Valterie and Dacier, and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogilby. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and perhaps never translated any passage till he had read his version, which indeed he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodize; but more <sup>30</sup> was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier, but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was therefore necessarily con-

sulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was therefore to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities, and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator 'in part upon the "Iliad;"' and it appears from Fenton's letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius, but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted: another man of Cambridge was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third, that was recommended by Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: 'I think at first sight that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the 17th Book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. . . . I have here enclosed the specimen, if the rest come before you return, I will keep them till I receive your order.'

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was probably accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the 'Iliad,' with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year, and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a-day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The 'Iliad,' containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been despatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may seem to have been slow, but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose that as much as has been done to-day may be done to-morrow, but on the morrow some difficulty emerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation, and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against Time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have over-rated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and seventy-five. The copies for which subscriptions were given were six hundred and fifty-four, and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For those copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings, without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for public employment,

but never proposed a pension. While the translation of Homer was in its progress, Mr. Craggs, then Secretary of State, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope; who told him, however, that if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too <sup>15</sup> much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want, by considerable annuities. The estate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year payable to Pope, which doubtless his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English 'Iliad.' It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen, and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of learning. <sup>20</sup>

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the 'Iliad,' which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity, descended from him to Mallet, and is now, by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty, reposed in the Museum.

Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental <sup>30</sup> fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts,

and shall exhibit first the printed lines; then, in a smaller print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print which are given in Italics are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the *first book* stands thus:—

The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring  
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddess, sing;  
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign  
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.

The stern Pelides' *rage*, O Goddess, sing,  
wrath  
Of all the woes of *Greece* the fatal spring,  
Grecian  
That strew'd with *warriors* dead the Phrygian plain,  
heroes  
And *peopled* the dark hell with heroes slain;  
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,  
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,  
Since great Achilles and Atrides strove:  
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Whose limbs unburied on the hostile shore,  
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,  
Since first *Atrides* and *Achilles* strove;  
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Declare, O Muse, in what ill-fated hour  
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended Power,  
Latona's son a dire contagion spread,  
And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead;  
The King of men his reverend priest defied,  
And for the King's offence the people died.

Declare, O Goddess, what offended Power,  
Enflam'd their *rage*, in that *ill-omen'd* hour;  
anger fatal, hapless  
Phœbus himself the *dire* debate procur'd,  
fierce

To avenge the wrongs his injur'd priest endur'd;  
For this the God a dire infection spread,  
And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead:  
The King of men the sacred sire defied,  
And for the King's offence the people died.

For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain  
His captive daughter from the victor's chain;

Suppliant the venerable father stands,  
Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands,  
By these he begs, and, lowly bending down,  
Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown.

For Chryses sought by *presents to regain*  
costly gifts to gain

His captive daughter from the victor's chain;

Suppliant the venerable father stands,

Apollo's awful ensigns grac'd his hands;

By these he begs, and lowly bending down

*The golden sceptre* and the laurel crown,

Presents the sceptre

*For these as ensigns of his God he bare,*

*The God that sends his golden shafts afar;*

Then low on earth the venerable man,

Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He sued to all, but chief implor'd for grace  
The brother-kings of Atreus' royal race;  
Ye kings and warriors, may your vows be crown'd,  
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;  
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,  
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

To all he sued, but chief implor'd for grace

The brother kings of Atreus' royal race.

*Ye sons of Atreus, may your vows be crown'd,*  
kings and warriors

*Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours crown'd;*

*So may the gods your arms with conquest bless,*

And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;

*Till laid*

*And crown your labours with deserved success;*

May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,

Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,  
And give Chryseis to these arms again;  
If mercy fail, yet let my present move,  
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain,

And give my daughter to these arms again;

*Receive my gifts;* if mercy fails, yet let my present move,

And fear *the God that deals his darts around,*  
avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent declare  
The priest to reverence, and release the fair.  
Not so Atrides; he with kingly pride,  
Repul'sd the sacred Sire, and thus replied.

He said, the Greeks their joint assent declare,  
*The father said, the gen'rous Greeks relent,*

T<sup>e</sup> accept the ransom, and release the fair :  
*Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent;*  
 Not so the tyrant, he, with kingly pride,  
 Atrides  
*Repul'sd the sacred Sire, and thus replied.*  
 [Not so the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first book, I am told that there was yet a former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the *second book* varies very little from the printed page, and is therefore set down without any parallel : the few slight differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye ;  
 Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie ;  
 Th' Immortals slumber'd on their thrones above,  
 All but the ever-watchful eye of Jove.  
 To honour Thetis' son he bends his care,  
 And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war.  
 Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight,  
 And thus commands the vision of the night :  
 directs  
 Fly hence, delusive dream, and, light as air,  
 To Agamemnon's royal tent repair ;  
 Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train,  
 March all his legions to the dusty plain.  
*Now tell the King 'tis given him to destroy*  
 Declare ev'n now  
 The lofty walls of wide-extended Troy ;  
 tow'rs  
 For now no more the Gods with Fate contend ;  
 At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end.  
 Destruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,  
 hangs  
 And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall.

*Invocation to the Catalogue of Ships.*

Say, Virgins, seated round the throne divine,  
 All-knowing Goddesses ! immortal Nine !  
 Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeasur'd height,  
 And hell's abyss, hide nothing from your sight,  
 (We, wretched mortals ! lost in doubts below,  
 But guess by rumour, and but boast we know)

Oh say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of fame,  
Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction came!  
To count them all, demands a thousand tongues,  
A throat of brass and adamantine lungs.

Now, Virgin Goddesses, immortal Nine !  
That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,  
Who see through heaven and earth, and hell profound,  
And all things know, and all things can resound ;  
Relate what armies sought the Trojan land,  
What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command ;  
(For doubtful Fame distracts mankind below,  
And nothing can we tell, and nothing know)  
Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,  
A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues were vain.

10

*Book V. v. I.*

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,  
Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires :  
Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,  
And crown her hero with distinguish'd praise,  
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,  
His beamy shield emits a living ray ;  
Th' unweared blaze incessant streams supplies,  
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

20

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,  
Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her fires ;  
force

O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raise,  
Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to raise,  
his deathless

And crown her hero with *immortal* praise :  
distinguish'd

30

*Bright from* his beamy *crest* the lightnings play,  
High on helm  
From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray,  
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,  
His beamy shield emits a living ray.

The Goddess with her breath the flame supplies,  
Bright as the star whose fires in Autumn rise ;  
Her breath divine thick streaming flames supplies,  
Bright as the star that fires the autumnal skies :  
Th' unweared blaze incessant streams supplies,  
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

40

When first he rears his radiant orb to sight,  
And bath'd in ocean shoots a keener light,  
Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd,  
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd ;

Onward she drives him furious to engage,  
Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage.

The sons of Dares first the combat sought,  
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;  
In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,  
The sons to toils of glorious battle bred.

There liv'd a Trojan—Dares was his name,  
The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame;  
The sons of Dares first the combat sought,  
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault.

Conclusion of Book VIII. v. 687.

As when the moon, resplendent lamp of night,  
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;  
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,  
And not a cloud o'er casts the solemn scene;  
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:  
O'er the dark trees a yeller verdure shed,  
And tip with silver every mountain's head;  
Then shine the vales—the rocks in prospect rise,  
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;  
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,  
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.  
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,  
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;  
The long reflections of the distant fires  
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires:  
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,  
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field;  
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,  
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send;  
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,  
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

As when in stillness of the silent night,  
 As when the moon in all her lustre bright,  
 As when the moon, resplendent lamp of night,  
 O'er heaven's clear azure sheds her silver light;  
 pure spreads sacred  
 As still in air the trembling lustre stood,  
 And o'er its golden border shoots a flood;  
 When no loose gale disturbs the deep serene,  
 not a breath  
 And no dim cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene; 10  
 not a  
 Around her silver throne the planets glow,  
 And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow;  
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,  
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:  
 Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,  
 o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds  
 O'er the dark trees a yellower green they shed,  
 gleam  
 verdue  
 And tip with silver all the mountain heads: 20  
 forest  
 And tip with silver every mountain's head.  
 The valleys open, and the forests rise,  
 The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise,  
 Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,  
 All Nature stands reveal'd before our eyes;  
 A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.  
 The conscious shepherd, joyful at the sight,  
 Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.  
 The conscious swains rejoicing at the sight 30  
 shepherds gazing with delight  
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the vivid light,  
 glorious  
 useful  
 So many flames before the navy blaze,  
 proud Ilion  
 And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays,  
 Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,  
 And tip the distant spires with fainter beams;  
 The long reflections of the distant fires  
 Gild the high walls, and tremble on the spires,  
 Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires;  
 A thousand fires at distant stations bright,  
 Gild the dark prospect, and dispel the night. 40

Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a greater number; but most other readers are already tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers. 50

The 'Iliad' was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded; the four first books appeared in 1715.

The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticism or poetry was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topic. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearsal Pope afterwards gave the following account<sup>1</sup>.

‘The famous Lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste than really possessed of it.—When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the “Iliad,” that Lord desired to have the pleasure of hearing them read at his house.—Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading. In four or five places, Lord Halifax stopt me very civilly, and with a speech each time, much of the same kind, “I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope, but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me. Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your leisure. I’m sure you can give it a little turn.” I returned from Lord 20 Halifax’s with Dr. Garth, in his chariot; and, as we were going along, was saying to the Doctor that my Lord had laid me under a good deal of difficulty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking over the passages almost ever since, and could not guess at what it was that offended his Lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at my embarrassment; said I had not been long enough acquainted with Lord Halifax to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about looking those places over and over when I got home. “All you need do (says he) is 30 to leave them just as they are; call on Lord Halifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answer-

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

able for the event." I followed his advice, waited on Lord Halifax some time after, said I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed, read them to him exactly as they were at first, and his Lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, "Ay, now they are perfectly right: nothing can be better."

It is seldom that the great or the wise suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to 10 have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single letter (Dec. 1, 1714), in which Pope says, 'I am obliged to you, both for the favours you have done me, and for those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome or solicitous, it must not be out of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your Lordship may cause me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is indeed 20 a high strain of generosity in you to think of making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to divert you some few hours; but, if I may have leave to add it is because you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better reason; for I must of consequence be very much (as I sincerely am) yours, &c.'

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude, and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of 30 each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be 'troublesome out of gratitude, not expectation.' Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence, and would give nothing, unless he knew

what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now<sup>1</sup> at the head of poetry and criticism, and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superior. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible by themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of these two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, 'nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge.'

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his Prologue to 'Cato,' by his abuse of Dennis, and, with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the 'Dialogues on Medals,' of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy, for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed that as Pope saw himself favoured by

the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened; and that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously or insidiously quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many, and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the proposals for the 'Iliad,' the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleased himself (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-established their friendship, and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. 'But,'<sup>20</sup> says he, 'as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and seems to be no very just one in regard to me, so I must own to you I expect nothing but civility from him.' In the same letter he mentions Philips as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but, in a letter to Addison, he expresses some consciousness of behaviour inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

'Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from everybody but me, who, I confess, could not but despise him. When I came to the antechamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and

business, and acted as master of requests.—Then he instructed a young nobleman that the *best Poet in England* was Mr. Pope (a papist), who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which *he must have them all subscribe*; for, says he, the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him.'

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankness and spirit, as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and in a calm even voice reproached Pope with his vanity, and telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said that he, being now engaged in public business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation; nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that he should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the public.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependence, and with the abuse of those qualifications which he had obtained at the public cost, and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of Homer was (1715) in time published; and a rival version of the first 'Iliad,' for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the critics and poets divided into factions. 'I,' says Pope, 'have the town, that is the mob, on my side; but

it is not uncommon for the smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers.—I appeal to the people as my rightful judges, and, while they are not inclined to condemn me, shall not fear the high-flyers at Button's.' This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written ; and sometimes said that they were both good, <sup>10</sup> but that Tickell had more of 'Homer.'

Pope was now sufficiently irritated ; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared and fairly estimated. This design seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended at another time a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But while he was <sup>20</sup> thus meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow ; the voice of the public was not long divided, and the preference was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself ; but if he knew it in Addison's lifetime, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in <sup>30</sup> vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope<sup>1</sup> :—

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

‘ Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses and conversations: and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr. Addison; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us: and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me that Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and had given him ten guineas <sup>10</sup> after they were published. The next day, while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that if I was to speak severely of him, in return for it, it should be not in such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner:—I then adjoined the first sketch of what has been since called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly ever after.’

<sup>20</sup> The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope’s performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think only for his life, that house at Twickenham to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

<sup>30</sup> Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verses mention; and being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it with fossil bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto; a place of silence and retreat, from

which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun ; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden, and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amusements seem frivolous and childish ; whether it be that men conscious of great reputation think themselves above the reach of censure, and safe in the admission of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder ; like him who having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch.

While the volumes of his 'Homer' were annually published, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a Preface, written with great sprightliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted ; other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed.

In this year<sup>1</sup> his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of the month of January 1717. The second volume of the edition of Pope's poems was published in this month.

he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the 'Iliad' was at last completed in 1720. The splendour and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities; Burnet, who was afterwards a judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called 'Homerides' before it was published; Ducket likewise endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, whoever his critics were, their writings are lost, and the names which are preserved, are preserved in the 'Dunciad.'

In this disastrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and he for a while thought himself the lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long, and he seems to have waked soon enough to get clear with the loss only of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise.

He gave the same year (1721) an edition of 'Shakspeare.' His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakspeare's plays in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed. The reputation of that edition in-

deed sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called 'Shakspeare Restored,' and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and, as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied by the desire of humbling a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collators, commentators, and verbal critics; and hoped to persuade the world that he miscarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If 20 he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded with great skill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakspeare by Dryden; and he drew the public attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the 'Iliad,' resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the 'Odyssey,' in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, 30 being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of saying that he had 'translated' the 'Odyssey,' as he had said of the 'Iliad,' he says that he had 'undertaken' a translation; and in the proposals the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of 'two of his friends who have assisted him in this work.'

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study of the Popish controversy, in hope of his conversion; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles or his judgment. In questions and projects of learning, they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domestic life, and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His Letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude: 'perhaps,' says he, 'it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the Bishop of Rochester.' At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a Bible.

Of the 'Odyssey' Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The public was carefully kept ignorant of the several shares, and an account was subjoined at the conclusion which is now known not to be true.

The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the 'Iliad,' and the latter books of the 'Iliad' less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility.

The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the same as for the 'Iliad,' except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers was five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725, and from that time he resolved to make no more translations.

The sale did not answer Lintot's expectation, and he then pretended to discover something of fraud in Pope, and commenced, or threatened, a suit in Chancery.

On the English 'Odyssey' a criticism was published<sup>1</sup> by Spence, at that time Prelector of Poetry at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just; what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critic without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity.

With this criticism Pope was so little offended that he sought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful, and he obtained very valuable preferments in the Church.

Not long after<sup>2</sup> Pope was returning home from a visit in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death,

<sup>1</sup> 1727.

<sup>2</sup> September, 1726.

when the postilion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a letter of consolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the Court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.

10 He soon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of 'Miscellanies,' in which amongst other things he inserted the 'Memoirs of a Parish Clerk,' in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own History, and a 'Debate upon Black and White Horses,' written in all the formalities of a legal process by the assistance, as is said, of Mr. Fortescue, afterwards Master of the Rolls. Before these 'Miscellanies' is a preface signed by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantic complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and sale of their papers. He tells, in tragic strains, how 'the cabinets of the sick and the closets of the dead have been broke open and ransacked; as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and essays were in danger where gold and diamonds are safe. A cat, hunted for his musk, is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers.

30 His complaint, however, received some attestation; for the same year the letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell, in his youth, were sold by Mrs. Thomas to Curril, who printed them.

In these 'Miscellanies' was first published the 'Art of Sinking in Poetry,' which, by such a train of consequences

as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion to the 'Dunciad.'

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and shewed his satirical powers by publishing the 'Dunciad,' one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves.

At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom 10 he accused of ingratitude, but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised 'Shakspeare' more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unnecessarily interposing in the quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and slow: the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common 20 readers. Many of the allusions required illustration; the names were often expressed only by the initial and final letters, and, if they had been printed at length, were such as few had known or recollectcd. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribbler was a dunce? If, therefore, it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the 'Dunciad' might have made its way very slowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected; every man is of 30 importance to himself, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is perhaps the first to publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unless

related by himself, and at which those that hear them will only laugh; for no man sympathizes with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the 'Dunciad' is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a Dedication which he wrote to Lord Middlesex in the name of Savage.

'I will relate the war of the "Dunces" (for so it has been commonly called), which began in the year 1727, and ended in 1730.

10 'When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the Preface to their "Miscellanies," to publish such little pieces of theirs as had casually got abroad, there was added to them the "Treatise of the Bathos," or the "Art of Sinking in Poetry." It happened that in one chapter of this piece the several species of bad poets were arranged in classes, to which were prefixed almost all the letters of the alphabet (the greatest part of them at random), but such was the number of poets eminent in that art, that some one or other took every letter to himself; all fell into so violent  
20 a fury, that, for half a year or more, the common newspapers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods and scurrilities they could possibly devise. A liberty no way to be wondered at in those people and in those papers, that for many years, during the uncontrolled licence of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age, and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure.

30 'This gave Mr. Pope the thought that he had now some opportunity of doing good by detecting and dragging into light these common enemies of mankind, since to invalidate this universal slander it sufficed to shew what contemptible men were the authors of it. He was not without hopes that, by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to

recommend them, either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the "Dunciad," and he thought it an happiness, that, by the late flood of slander on himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their names as was necessary to this design.

On the 12th of March, 1729, at St. James's, that poem was presented to the King and Queen (who had before been pleased to read it) by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, and some days after the whole impression was taken and dispersed by several noblemen and persons of the first distinction.

It is certainly a true observation that no people are so impatient of censure as those who are the greatest slanderers, which was wonderfully exemplified on this occasion. On the day the book was first vended, a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the "Dunciad;" on the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public? There was no stopping a torrent with a finger, so out it came.

Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The "Dunces" (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs, to consult of hostilities against the author; one wrote a letter to a great minister, assuring him Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the government had, and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy, with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted.

Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece, the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in its stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one

being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned for distinction to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass; by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of the "Dunciad."

Pope appears by this narrative to have contemplated his victory over the 'Dunces' with great exultation, and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for a while his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confession, he was the aggressor; for nobody believes that the letters in the 'Bathos' were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the King and Queen by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility, and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which, by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters of those whom he had satirised, was made intelligible and diverting. The critics had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decipher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view, and delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice which they had hitherto contemplated as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appeased by mutual civilities, and published remarks<sup>1</sup>, which he had till then suppressed, upon the 'Rape of the Lock.' Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with 'pious passion,' pretended that his moral character was injured, and for some time declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him by changing 'pious passion' to 'cordial friendship,' and by a note in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superior to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologize; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The 'Dunciad,' in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift; of the notes, part was written by Dr. Arbuthnot, and an apologetical letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity, but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published (1731) a poem on 'Taste,' in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addressed, was privately said to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind

and beneficent, and who had consequently the voice of the public in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of a thousand pounds Pope publicly denied, but from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind dissimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory letter to the Duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man, but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, 'owns that such critics can intimidate him, nay almost persuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves.' The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous, for the world can easily go on without him, and in a short time will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon a bridge. 'There is nothing,' says Juvenal, 'that a man will not believe in his own favour.' Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him intreated and implored, and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year<sup>1</sup> deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old, an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible, and when therefore the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three, but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some enquiry, was a publication of letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of Curril, a rapacious bookseller of no good fame, were by him printed and sold<sup>2</sup>. This volume containing some letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the House of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curril appeared at the bar, and knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence. 'He has,' said Curril, 'a knack at versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him.' When the orders of the House were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curril went away triumphant, and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curril's account was, that one evening a man in a clergy-

<sup>1</sup> 1732. <sup>2</sup> In 1735.

man's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epistolary correspondence ; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorized to use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curril gave a true account of the transaction, it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected ; and when some years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be that Pope knew better than anybody else how Curril obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them public, that they were sent at once to two booksellers, to Curril, who was likely to seize them as a prey, and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing, and Curril did what was expected. That to make them public was the only purpose may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers shewed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression.

It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion ; that when he could complain that his letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes, and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some letters which a very good or

a very wise man would wish suppressed, but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From the perusal of those Letters, Mr. Allen first conceived a desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost.

This, however, Pope did not accept; but in time solicited a subscription for a quarto volume, which appeared (1737),<sup>10</sup> I believe, with sufficient profit. In the Preface he tells that his Letters were reposed in a friend's library, said to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the Preface to the 'Miscellanies' was written to prepare the public for such an incident; and, to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the <sup>20</sup> books to Currill.

When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters, being either private or literary, were little known or little regarded, they awakened no popular kindness or resentment; the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as contemporary history, and some perhaps as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did <sup>30</sup> not talk of it. Not much, therefore, was added by it to fame or envy, nor do I remember that it produced either public praise or public censure.

It had, however, in some degree, the recommendation of

novelty. Our language has few Letters, except those of statesmen. Howel, indeed, about a century ago, published his Letters, which are commended by Morhoff, and which alone of his hundred volumes continue his memory. Lovelady's Letters were printed only once, those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips's [Orinda's] are equally neglected, and those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; 10 he had no English rival, living or dead.

Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison: but it must be remembered that he had the power of favouring himself; he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured: and I know not whether there does not appear something more studied and artificial in his productions than the rest, except one long letter by 20 Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is indeed not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift perhaps like a man who remembered that he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind.

Before these Letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of ethics, 30 under the title of an 'Essay on Man;' which, if his letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open and doubtless many

secret enemies. The 'Dunces' were yet smarting with the war, and the superiority which he publicly arrogated disposed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem, being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Those friends of Pope that were trusted with the secret went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his 'Essay' as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With these precautions, in 1733 was published the first part of the 'Essay on Man.' There had been for some time a report that Pope was busy upon a System of Morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect: the sale increased, and editions were multiplied.

The subsequent editions of the first Epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend

‘Expatriate freely o’er this scene of man,  
A mighty maze of walks without a plan.’

For which he wrote afterwards,

‘A mighty maze, *but not without a plan:*’

for, if there was no plan, it was in vain to describe or to trace the maze.

10 The other alteration was of these lines;

‘And spite of pride, *and in thy reason’s spite,*  
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:’

but having afterwards discovered, or been shewn, that the ‘truth’ which subsisted ‘in spite of reason’ could not be very ‘clear,’ he substituted

‘And spite of pride, *in erring reason’s spite.*’

To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

20 The second and third Epistles were published, and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the conclusion it is sufficiently acknowledged that the doctrine of the ‘Essay on Man’ was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme 30 regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, has been reported, but hardly can be true. The ‘Essay’ plainly appears the fabric of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied

could be only the first principles ; the order, illustration, and embellishments, must all be Pope's.

These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood ; but they were not immediately examined ; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers ; and the 'Essay' abounded in splendid amplifications and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired, with no great attention to their ultimate purpose ; its flowers caught the eye which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flourished in the <sup>10</sup> sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspicious, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards by Resnel into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his <sup>20</sup> treatise of Logic, and his *Examen de Pyrrhonisme*, and, however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and perhaps was grown too desirous of detecting faults ; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure.

His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely <sup>30</sup> rational ; and therefore it was not long before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated for the most part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of

things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable that, in many passages, a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals or to liberty.

10 About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor 10 clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him a haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited 20 against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman Emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves: his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with 30 the notice of inferior wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A letter was produced, when he had perhaps himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, 'Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton out of pride, and Addison out of

modesty.' And when Theobald published 'Shakspeare'<sup>1</sup>, in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion, and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; <sup>10</sup> but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted and dismissed without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the 'Essay on Man,' in the literary journal of <sup>20</sup> that time called the 'Republic of Letters.'

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender, the following letter evidently shews:—

' March 24, 1743.

' SIR,

' I have just received from Mr. R. two more of your letters. <sup>30</sup> It is in the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this; but I cannot help thanking you in particular for your third letter, which is so extremely clear, short, and full, that I think Mr.

Crousaz ought never to have another answerer, and deserved not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too much honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems ; for you have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is, indeed, the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I meant just what you explain, but I did not explain to my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself, but you express me better than I could express myself. Pray accept the sincerest acknowledgments. I cannot but wish these letters were put together in one book, and intend (with your leave) to procure a translation of part, at least, of all of them into French ; but I shall not proceed a step without your consent and opinion, &c.'

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion ; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him without his own consent an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged with his eyes open on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard ; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him ; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion.

From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr. Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and by consequence a bishopric. When he died, he left him the property of his works, a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand pounds.

Pope's fondness for the 'Essay on Man' appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's 'Solomon,' was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was for that purpose some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished; and, by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of 'Paradise Lost.' Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should turn his Essay into Latin prose; but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time *among the great*, with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French Minister an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness.

It was said that, when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet

offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore angry at Swift, who represents him as 'refusing the visits of a Queen,' because he knew that what had never been offered had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality supposed to be contained in the 'Essay on Man,' it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the Epistle to Lord Bathurst (1733) on the 'Use of Riches,' a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed<sup>1</sup>.

Into this poem some incidents are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrle, the Man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his public works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from *five hundred a-year*. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrle was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the minister of the place, and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantic and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shewn to be possible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the Pope, and by mentioning with some indignation the inscription on the monument.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea, for he calls that an 'Epistle to Bathurst,' in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

He afterwards (1734) inscribed to Lord Cobham his 'Characters of Men,' written with 'close attention to the 10 operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the *ruling passion*, by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propension.'

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no 20 means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleasure is at another a lover of money. Those, indeed, who attain any excellence, commonly spend life in one pursuit; for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must be at least allowed that this *ruling passion*, antece- 30 dent to reason and observation, must have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man, therefore, can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be

born where money does not exist; nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country, is possible only to those whom enquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itself pernicious as well as false: its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or overruling principle which cannot be resisted; he  
 10 that admits it, is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of Nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his *ruling passion*.

Pope has formed his theory with so little skill, that, in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the 'Characters of Men' he added soon after, in an epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the 'Characters 20 of Women.' This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the public was informed by an advertisement, that it contained *no character drawn from the life*; an assertion which Pope probably did not expect or wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them in a note, that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was *vice too high to be yet exposed.*

30 The time, however, soon came in which it was safe to display the Duchess of Marlborough under the name of *Atossa*; and her character was inserted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He published from time to time (between 1730 and 1740)

imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once, as was suspected, without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarised, by adapting their sentiments to modern topics, by making Horace say of Shakspeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and <sup>10</sup> Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it further than any former poet.

He published likewise a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's 'Satires,' which was recommended to him by the <sup>20</sup> Duke of Shrewsbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the public. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and therefore suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived in its first design from Boileau's *Address à son Esprit*, was published in January 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted <sup>30</sup> that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in

his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination ; a scholar of great brilliancy of wit ; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the public. He vindicates himself from censures ; and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindness and respect.

10 Into this poem are interwoven several paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the satirical lines upon Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,—

‘Who would not smile if such a man there be?  
Who would not laugh if Addison were he?’

Then,—

‘Who would not grieve if such a man there be?  
Who would not laugh if Addison were he?’

At last it is,—

20 ‘Who but must laugh if such a man there be?  
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?’

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the Ministry ; and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets, had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps cannot now be easily known : he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls, ‘Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure ;’ and hints that his father was a *hatter*. To this Pope wrote a reply  
30 in verse and prose : the verses are in this poem ; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his Letters, but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last Satires, of the general kind, were two Dialogues, named, from the year in which they were published, 'Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight.' In these poems many are praised and many are reproached. Pope was then entangled in the Opposition ; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the Ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shewn ; he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending, through much more violent conflicts of faction. 10

In the first Dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to mention him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses 'low-born Allen.' Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened into 'humble Allen.'

In the second Dialogue he took some liberty with one of the Foxes, among others ; which Fox, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the 20 friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the Legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the Lords for a poem called 'Manners,' together with Dodsley his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, sculked and escaped ; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed ; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope than to punish White- 30 head.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his

commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money: he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment; till at last he began to think he should be more safe if he were less busy.

The 'Memoirs of Scriblerus,' published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert <sup>10</sup> by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themselves the 'Scriblerus Club.' Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious Life of an infatuated Scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; <sup>20</sup> for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt.

For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides <sup>30</sup> its general resemblance to 'Don Quixote,' there will be found in it particular imitations of the history of Mr. Oufle.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small selection from the Italians who wrote in Latin had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man who concealed his name, but whom 10 his preface shews to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured.

He did not sink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his 'Essay on Man,' of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift:—

March 25, 1736.

'If ever I write any more Epistles in verse, one of them shall be addressed to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to say, more finished than any of the rest. The subject is large, and will divide into four Epistles, which naturally follow the 'Essay on Man,' viz., 1. Of the Extent and Limits of Human Reason and Science. 2. A View of the Useful and therefore Attainable, and of the Unuseful and therefore Unattainable Arts. 3. Of the Nature, 30 Ends, Application, and Use of different Capacities. 4. Of the Use of Learning, of the Science, of the World, and of Wit. It will conclude with a Satire against the misapplication of all these, exemplified by Pictures, Characters, and Examples.'

This work, in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the 'Dunciad,' of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been 10 for some time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though in one of the Imitations of Horace he has liberally enough praised the 'Careless Husband.' In the 'Dunciad,' among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his 'Apology,' complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, 'because,' says he, 'I never have offended him.'

It might have been expected that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollified by this submissive gentleness; but 20 no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his Satires, and again in his Epistle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the 'Dunciad' attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the Laureate, he satirised those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great.

The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer any 30 patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and doubtless did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in

which he declares his resolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the 'Three Hours after Marriage' had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played 'Bayes' in the 'Rehearsal'; and, as it had <sup>10</sup> been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a mummy and a crocodile. 'This,' says he, 'was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play.' Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of a 'wit out of his senses;' to which he replied, 'that he would take no other notice of what was said by so particular a man, than to declare, that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation.' <sup>20</sup>

He shews his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously defended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expense of the higher <sup>30</sup> character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody enquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity.

He should, therefore, have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shewn as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain.

10 But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and to shew that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published<sup>1</sup> a new edition of the 'Dunciad,' in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry, and sluggish pertinacity of

20 Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the 'Dunciad'; but he had the fate of Cassandra; I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but

<sup>1</sup> In 1743.

himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he destroyed its efficacy; for, by shewing that what he had said of one he was ready to say of another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpie, who from his cage calls 'cuckold' at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the 'Dunciad,' with another pamphlet, which, Pope said, 'would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him'; but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate that he attended his father the painter on a visit, when one of Cibber's 10 pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, 'These things are my diversion.' They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhen with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revisal 20 and correction of his former works, in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his epic poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject therefore was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had 30 adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead; by which it appears that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names of his

heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he places them.

He lingered through the next year, but perceived himself, as he expresses it, 'going down the hill.' He had for at least five years been afflicted with an asthma and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man who had, by large promises and free censures of the common practice of physic, forced himself up into sudden reputation.

10 Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap, but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the terrace, and asked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs, and sat still; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger 20 and less captious, waited on the lady, who, when he came to her, asked, 'What, is he not dead yet?' She is said to have neglected him with shameful unkindness in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave, she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their conversation therefore was endearing, for when they met there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was 30 conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only

shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May, 1744, his death was approaching<sup>1</sup>; on the sixth he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, 'It has so.' And added, 'I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind.' At another time he said, 'I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than'—his grief then suppressed his voice. 2c

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called, he answered, 'I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.'

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said, 'There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.'

He died in the evening of the 30th day of May, 1744, so placidly that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his 30

<sup>1</sup> Spence.

father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the Bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors, first to Lord Bolingbroke, and, if he should not be living, to the Earl of Marchmont, undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time Dodsley the bookseller went to solicit preference as the publisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was 'reserved for the next age.'

He lost, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet called 'The Patriot King' had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed, according to the author's direction, among his friends, and Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which 20 Pope had ordered him to print and to retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious as the violator had been more loved or more 30 trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance excited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last struggles; and he employed

Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the public with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose, and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always something criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced, what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he enquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the 10 work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shewn to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim ; he could not gratify his avarice, for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead ; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself, would be useless.

Warburton therefore supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to pre- 20 serve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in a 'Letter to the most impudent Man living.'

He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcileable dislike, and the door 30 was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to refuse any legacy from Pope unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering

in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or, perhaps with the prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the Hospital at Bath, observing that Pope was always a bad accountant, and that if to £150 he had put a cypher more, he had come nearer to the truth.

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THE person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the 'Little Club,' compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a 'long disease.' His most frequent assailant was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose he was invested in bodice made of stiff canvas, being scarce able to hold himself erect

till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tye-wig and a little 10 sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that everything should give way to his ease or humour, as a child whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

*'C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,  
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.'*

When he wanted to sleep he 'nodded in company'; and 20 once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford 30 discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope.

One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthensome ; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep ; and Lord Oxford's servant declared that in a house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault, easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite ;  
10 he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste ; and, at the intervals of the table, amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion, and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by a javelin or a sword ; the slaughterers of  
20 Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat is certain ; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind he had a great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by  
30 indirect and unsuspected methods. 'He hardly drank tea without a stratagem.' If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient ; though, when it was procured, he soon made it

appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that 'he played the politician about cabbages and turnips.' His unjustifiable impression of the 'Patriot King,' as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear <sup>10</sup> that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable that so near his time so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation, nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection raised against his inscription for Shakspeare was defended by the authority of Patrick, he replied—'horresco referens'—that 'he would allow the publisher of a dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together.'

He was fretful, and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no entreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened <sup>20</sup> to such asperity that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors, but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved, but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the 'Iliad,' by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire and say, 'Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.' Yet he tells his friends that 'he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all.'

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a-year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which, as it arose from public approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full; it would be hard to find a man so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his letters and in his poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty, the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an

opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want everything.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility, a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set genius to sale ; he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage, <sup>10</sup> however, remarked that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for ‘his Highness’s dog.’

His admiration of the great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his ‘Iliad’ to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete had his friend’s virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour it is not now possible to know ; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the letters among those of his other <sup>20</sup> friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice, for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity ; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed ; <sup>30</sup> they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true

characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were simple friendships of the 'Golden Age,' and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophiscation than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known, and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

✓ To charge those favourable representations which men give of their own minds with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when

there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed they are felt, and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge, and another to solicit the imagination because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated <sup>10</sup> with *affection and ambition*; to know whether he disengaged himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when 'he has just nothing else to do;' yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he <sup>20</sup> 'had always some poetical scheme in his head.' It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose, and Lord Oxford's domestic related that, in the dreadful winter of Forty<sup>1</sup>, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his <sup>30</sup> critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a

foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that 'he never sees Courts.' Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his Royal Highness, 'How he could love a Prince while he disliked Kings?'

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention, and sometimes with gloomy indignation, 10 as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just, and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper, he was sufficiently *a fool to Fame*, and his fault was 20 that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the Post-30 office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; 'after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us,' says he, 'may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;' and

they can live together, and 'shew what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world.' All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand ; he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites ; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere ; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that 'a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world,' and that there was danger lest 'a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement.' To this Swift answered with great propriety that Pope had not yet either acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society. 20

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more

likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks, and, before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous, but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a-year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money, but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers entrusted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance to be used, if any provocation should be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not <sup>10</sup> scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the Scriptures, a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man despairs for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of Revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox. 20

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated; those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was, in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and when he wrote his 'Essay on Criticism' had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered <sup>30</sup> into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions

fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading, and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his 'Essay on Man,' when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, 'More than I expected.' His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them: it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him

not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life, and however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered anything that could be improved he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be <sup>20</sup> wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure; he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their <sup>30</sup> own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of

Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence; he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and indeed by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence 10 was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had, in his mind, a systematical arrangement: having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic: he never exchanged praise 20 for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarce ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song, and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

30 His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection; it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of

invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared to with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel; and therefore always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of 'Thirty-eight ;' of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. 'Almost every line,' he said, 'was then written twice over ; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost <sup>10</sup> every line written twice over a second time.'

His declaration that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them ; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the 'Iliad,' and freed it from some of its imperfections ; and the 'Essay on Criticism' received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden, but <sup>20</sup> Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. <sup>30</sup> There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either ; for both excelled likewise in prose ; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and

varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is <sup>10</sup> inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden,

let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination.

THE Works of Pope are now to be distinctly examined, not so much with attention to slight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience, and, exhibiting only the simple operation of unmixed passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep enquiry. Pope's pastorals are not, however, composed but with close thought; they have reference to the time of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the *Zephyrs* are made to *lament in silence*.

To charge these pastorals with want of invention, is to require what never was intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to shew his literature than his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language, and skill in metre, to exhibit a series of versification which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation.

The design of 'Windsor Forest' is evidently derived from 'Cooper's Hill,' with some attention to Waller's poem on 'The Park'; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging descrip-

tion, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shewn must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspense, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader. 10

But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of 'Windsor Forest' which deserve least praise, are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene, the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of Lodona. Addison had in his 'Campaign' derided the rivers that 'rise from their oozy beds' to tell stories of heroes, and it is therefore strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; 20 nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The 'Temple of Fame' has, as Steele warmly declared, 'a thousand beauties.' Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected, and learnedly displayed: yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little 30 relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice, but is turned silently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the 'Messiah' excels the 'Pollio' is no great praise,

if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.

The 'Verses on the Unfortunate Lady' have drawn much attention by the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with respect; and they must be allowed to be written in some parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the Lady or her Guardian. History relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the uncle to detestation for his pride; the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an uncle, but never by his pride. On such an occasion a poet may be allowed to be obscure, but inconsistency never can be right.

The 'Ode for St. Cecilia's Day' was undertaken at the desire of Steele: in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried, yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.

Both the odes want the essential constituent of metrical compositions, the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alleged, that Pindar is said by Horace to have written *numeris lege solutis*: but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed; and perhaps the like return might properly

be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticisms upon a Greek exercise, which Cobb had presented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at last, 'Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one.'

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds.

The second consists of hyperbolical commonplaces, easily to be found, and perhaps without much difficulty to be as 10 well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow can be found: the poet, however, faithfully attends us; we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail without better matter? 20

The last stanza recurs again to commonplaces. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault, the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts; Pope, with all this labour in the praise of music, was ignorant of its principles, and insensible of its effects.

One of his greatest, though of his earliest works, is the 'Essay on Criticism,' which, if he had written nothing else, 30 would have placed him among the first critics and the first poets; as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of

illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be so soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the Essay would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to observe, that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with 10 the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is perhaps the best that English poetry can shew. A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennable the subject; must shew it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. In didactic poetry, of which the great purpose is instruction, a simile may be praised which illustrates, though it does not ennable; in heroics, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its 20 references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this, antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which, having no parallels, served only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called 'comparisons with a long tail.' In their similes the greatest writers have sometimes failed; the ship-race, compared with the chariot-race, is neither illustrated nor aggrandised; land and water make all the difference: when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of 30 pursuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer, and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage by a hare and a dog. The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables

it to take faster hold on the attention ; it assists the apprehension, and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewise dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph in which it is directed that 'the sound should seem an echo to the sense ;' a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this représentation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *thump, rattle, growl, hiss*. These, however, are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was in the dactylic measures of the learned languages capable of considerable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were perhaps expressed by verses rapid or slow, without much attention of the writer, when the image had full possession of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and a *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some sort exemplified ; and yet it may be suspected that even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of the most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus :—

'With many a weary step, and many a groan,  
Up a high hill, he heaves a huge round stone ;'

The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,  
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.'

Who does not perceive the stone to move slowly upward,  
and roll violently back? But set the same numbers to another  
sense;—

‘While many a merry tale, and many a song,  
Cheer’d the rough road, we wish’d the rough road long.  
The rough road then, returning in a round,  
Mock’d our impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.’

10 We have now surely lost much of the delay, and much of the  
rapidity.

But to shew how little the greatest master of numbers  
can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be  
sufficient to remark that the poet who tells us that

‘When Ajax strives—

the words move slow.

Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o’er th’ unbending corn, and skims along the main;’

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praise of  
20 Camilla’s lightness of foot, tried another experiment upon  
*sound and time*, and produced this memorable triplet;—

‘Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.’

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race, and the march of  
slow-paced majesty, exhibited by the same poet in the same  
sequence of syllables, except that the exact prosodist will  
find the line of *swiftness* by one time longer than that of  
*tardiness*.

30 Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when  
real, are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not  
to be solicited.

To the praises which have been accumulated on ‘The  
Rape of the Lock’ by readers of every class, from the critic

to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now enquired from what sources the power of pleasing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana. The employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own <sup>10</sup> absurdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions; when the phantom is put in motion, it dissolves; thus *Discord* may raise a mutiny, but *Discord* cannot conduct a march, nor besiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The sylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table what more terrific and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean, or the field of battle; they give their proper help, and do their proper mischief.

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Pope is said, by an objector, not to have been the inventor of this petty nation; a charge which might with more justice have been brought against the author of the 'Iliad,' who doubtless adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

30

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aërial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in

a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph, and detests a gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration, that, though nothing is disguised, everything is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.

The purpose of the Poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at 'the little unguarded follies of the female sex.' It is therefore without justice that Dennis charges 'The Rape of the Lock' with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the 'Lutrin,' which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but if they had both succeeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from public gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous; that, by all the bustle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither hastened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose, and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been

sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewise be charged with want of connection; the game at *ombre* might be spared, but if the lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those perhaps are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence!

The Epistle of 'Eloisa to Abelard' is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloisa were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection, for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supersedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without straggling into scenes of fable.

The story, thus skilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revisal. Here is particularly observable the *curiosa felicitas*, a fruitful soil, and careful cultivation. Here is no crudeness of sense, nor asperity of language.

The sources from which sentiments which have so much <sup>30</sup> vigour and efficacy have been drawn, are shewn to be the mystic writers by the learned author of the 'Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope,' a book which teaches how the brow of criticism may be smoothed, and how she

may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the 'Iliad,' a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks translation was almost unknown; it was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourse to the Barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for everything in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless perhaps Anguillara's 'Ovid' may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The 'Iliad' of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantic, and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject it with disgust.

Their predecessors the Romans have left some specimens of translation behind them, and that employment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the wisdom of the ancients, but found themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author, could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer, and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope searched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it

will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art, that he has left in his 'Homer' a treasure of poetical elegances to posterity. His version may be said to have tuned the English tongue; for since its appearance no writer however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines so elaborately corrected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the public ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation. 10

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by some, who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homerical; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristic manner of the father of poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty. This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that *necessitas quod cogit defendit*; that may be lawfully done which cannot be forborene. Time and place will always enforce regard. 20 In estimating this translation, consideration must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabric with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude 30 of borrowed passages, very few can be shewn which he has not embellished.

There is a time when nations emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leisure to grow

wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for a while is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, in the progress of learning, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance.  
10 One refinement always makes way for another, and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English 'Iliad,' when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtless owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expense of dignity. A hero would  
20 wish to be loved, as well as to be reverenced.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though  
30 they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, those of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has however been objected, with sufficient reason, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the ladies, and the ease which is so carefully preserved is sometimes the ease of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style; the gravity of common critics may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the 'Odyssey' nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to imitate his master.

Of the 'Dunciad' the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's 'Mac Flecknoe'; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords perhaps the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous.

That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his 'Shakspeare,' and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and therefore it was necessary to find other enemies with other names, at whose expense he might divert the public.

In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or deformity are not culpable in themselves, but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprobation, what should restrain them? *impune diem consumpsert ingens Telephus*; and

upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam.

All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies error and improves judgment; he that refines the public taste is a public benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the grossness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages; such as the formation and dissolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the misfortune of the Florist, and the crowded thoughts and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

The alterations which have been made in the 'Dunciad,' not always for the better, require that it should be published, as in the last collection, with all its variations.

20 The 'Essay on Man' was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the happiest of Pope's performances. The subject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject; metaphysical morality was to him a new study, he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first Epistle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because Infinite Excellence can do 30 only what is best. He finds out that these beings must be 'somewhere,' and that 'all the question is whether man be in a wrong place.' Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place

because he has it. Supreme Wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by *somewhere* and *place*, and *wrong place*, it had been vain to ask Pope, who probably had never asked himself.

[Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension; an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain of subordinate beings 'from infinite to nothing,' of which himself and his 10 readers are equally ignorant.] But he gives us one comfort which, without his help, he supposes unattainable, in the position 'that though we are fools, yet God is wise.'

This Essay affords an egregious instance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the 20 talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the Essay, disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are, in comparison with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence, and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more; that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals; that if the world be made for man, it may be said that 30 man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new; that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits;

that evil is sometimes balanced by good ; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effect ; that our true honour is, not to have a great part, but to act it well : that virtue only is our own ; and that happiness is always in our power.

Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before ; but it was never till now recommended by such a blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of 10 some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure.

This is true of many paragraphs ; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critic, I should not select the 'Essay on Man ;' for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than 20 will easily be found in all his other works.

The 'Characters of Men and Women' are the product of diligent speculation upon human life ; much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his 'Characters of Women' with Boileau's Satire ; it will then be seen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated, and female excellence selected ; and he surely is no mean writer to whom Boileau shall be found inferior. The 'Characters 30 of Men,' however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many passages exquisitely beautiful. The 'Gem and the Flower' will not easily be equalled. In the women's part are some defects ; the character of Atossa is not so neatly finished as that of Clodio ; and some of the

female characters may be found perhaps more frequently among men; what is said of Philomede was true of Prior.

In the Epistles to Lord Bathurst and Lord Burlington, Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and, to support his hypothesis, has printed that first which was published last. In one, the most valuable passage is perhaps the Elegy on 'Good Sense,' and the other the 'End of the Duke of Buckingham.'

10

The 'Epistle to Arbuthnot,' now arbitrarily called the 'Prologue to the Satires,' is a performance consisting, as it seems, of many fragments wrought into one design, which by this union of scattered beauties contains more striking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than self-defence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity, than the poet's vindication of his own character. The meanest passage is the satire upon Sporus.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the 20 year, and which are called the 'Epilogue to the Satires,' it was very justly remarked by Savage that the second was in the whole more strongly conceived, and more equally supported, but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of Vice, and the celebration of the triumph of Corruption.

The 'Imitations of Horace' seem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the 30 sentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what is easy is seldom excellent; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers; the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected

parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners there will be an irreconcileable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured: neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern.

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had Invention, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed, as in 'The Rape of the Lock,' and by which extrinsic and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the 'Essay on Criticism.' He had Imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his 'Eloisa,' 'Windsor Forest,' and the 'Ethic Epistles.' He had Judgment, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and, by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sound as well as meaning; 'Music,' says Dryden, 'is inarticulate poetry;' among the excellences of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most perfect fabric of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best; in consequence of which restraint his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception: and

who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have thought with Boileau that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical: with those rhymes which prescription had conjoined he contented himself, without regard to Swift's 10 remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission at a small distance to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the exclusion of Alexandrines and triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; and always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in 'The Rape of the Lock.'

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses; but he 20 now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the 'Iliad' might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had perhaps infected him.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified was this:—

‘Lo, where Maeotis sleeps, and hardly flows  
The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.’

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It is remarked by Watts that there is scarcely a happy

combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shewn him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

10 New sentiments and new images others may produce; ✓ but to attempt any further improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only shew the narrowness of the definier, though a 20 definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him: if the writer of the 'Iliad' were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius.

30 The following letter, of which the original is in the hands of Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr. Jodrell.

‘To MR. BRIDGES, at the Bishop of London’s at Fulham.

‘SIR,

‘The favour of your letter, with your remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the speed with which you discharged so troublesome a task doubles the obligation.

‘I must own you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed upon me; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your censure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribbler to be improved in his judgment than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations from the Greek which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes, who are, it seems, as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decried for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have restored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of all former explainers, in several hundred places; and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin, attributed so much to Hobbes, that they confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author’s meaning to be as you have explained it, yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, overruled me. However, Sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion; (for men—let them say what they will—never approve any other sense but as it squares with their own). But you have made me much more proud of and positive in my judgment, since it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and shall make my profit of them; to give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden’s example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience, from one who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty

critics or commentators. But though I speak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of the invention and design, which are not at all confined to the language; for the distinguishing excellences of Homer are (by the consent of the best critics of all nations) first in the manners (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words); and then in that rapture and fire which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force that no man who has a true poetical spirit is master of himself while he reads him. Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at once, whereas Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought principally to imitate, and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason why all translations fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to, renders them heavy and dispirited.

‘The great beauty of Homer’s language, as I take it, consists in that noble simplicity which runs through all his works (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is at the same time very copious). I don’t know how I have run into this pedantry in a letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately; what farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet, which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity of proving how much I think myself obliged to your friendship, and how truly I am, Sir,

‘Your most faithful, humble servant,

‘A. POPE.’

The criticism upon Pope’s ‘Epitaphs,’ which was printed

in the 'Visitor,' is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inserted in the 'Life.'

Every art is best taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of those who have most excelled. I shall therefore endeavour, at this *visit*, to entertain the young students in poetry with an examination of Pope's 'Epitaphs.'

To define an epitaph is useless; every one knows that it is an inscription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be composed in verse or prose. It is indeed commonly panegyrical, because we are seldom distinguished with a stone but by our friends; but it has no rule to restrain or mollify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than common beholders may be expected to have leisure and patience to peruse.

## I.

*On Charles Earl of Dorset, in the Church of Wytham  
in Sussex.*

'Dorset, the grace of courts, the Muses' pride,  
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, died.

20

The scourge of pride, though sanctified or great,

Of fops in learning, and of knaves in state;

Yet soft in nature, though severe his lay,

His anger moral, and his wisdom gay.

Blest satirist! who touch'd the mean so true,

As shew'd, Vice had his hate and pity too.

Blest courtier! who could king and country please,

Yet sacred kept his friendship and his ease.

Blest peer! his great forefather's every grace

Reflecting, and reflected on his race;

30

Where other Buckhursts, other Dorsets shine,

And patriots still, or poets, deck the line.'

The first distich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man for whom the tomb was erected, *died*. There are indeed some qualities

worthy of praise ascribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he should die. What is meant by 'judge of nature' is not easy to say. Nature is not the object of human judgment, for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant what is commonly called *nature* by the critics, a just representation of things really existing, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly opposed to *art*, nature being, in this sense, only the best effect of *art*.

10

‘The scourge of pride—’

Of this couplet, the second line is not what is intended, an illustration of the former. *Pride*, in the *great*, is indeed well enough connected with knaves in state, though *knaves* is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of *sanctified* pride will not lead the thoughts to *fops in learning*, but rather to some species of tyranny or oppression, something more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

‘Yet soft his nature—’

This is a high compliment, but was not first bestowed on  
20 Dorset by Pope. The next verse is extremely beautiful:—

‘Blest satirist!—’

In this distich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame these imitations with much harshness; in long performances they are scarcely to be avoided, and in shorter they may be indulged, because the train of the composition may naturally involve them, or the scantiness of the subject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own, and it is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses his  
30 proper feather.

‘Blest courtier!—’

Whether a courtier can properly be commended for keep-

ing his *ease sacred*, may perhaps be disputable. To please king and country, without sacrificing friendship to any change of times, was a very uncommon instance of prudence or felicity, and deserved to be kept separate from so poor a commendation as care of his ease. I wish our poets would attend a little more accurately to the use of the word *sacred*, which surely should never be applied in a serious composition, but where some reference may be made to a higher Being, or where some duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendship *sacred*, because promises of friendship are very awful ties; but methinks he cannot, but in a burlesque sense, be said to keep his ease *sacred*.

*ancestor but mortal 'Blest peer!—'*

The blessing ascribed to the *peer* has no connection with his peerage; it might happen to any other man whose ancestors were remembered, or whose posterity were likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer or of the man entombed.

## II.

*On Sir William Trumbal, one of the principal Secretaries of State to King William III., who, having resigned his place, died in his retirement at Easthampstead, in Berkshire, 1716.*

'A pleasing form, a firm, yet cautious mind,  
Sincere, though prudent; constant, yet resign'd;  
Honour unchang'd, a principle profest,  
Fix'd to one side, but moderate to the rest:  
An honest courtier, yet a patriot too,  
Just to his prince, and to his country true.  
Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,  
A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;  
A generous faith, from superstition free;  
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;  
Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,  
At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.'

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the

first view, a fault which I think scarcely any beauty can compensate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey some account of the dead, and to what purpose is anything told of him whose name is concealed? An epitaph, and a history of a nameless hero are equally absurd, since the virtues and qualities so recounted in either, are scattered at the mercy of fortune, to be appropriated by guess. The name, it is true, may be read upon the stone, but what obligation has it to the poet, whose verses wander over the earth, and leave their subject behind them, and who is forced, like an unskilful painter, to make his purpose known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing striking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his subject. He said perhaps the best that could be said. There are, however, some defects which were not made necessary by the character in which he was employed. There is no opposition between an *honest courtier* and a *patriot*, for an *honest courtier* cannot but be a *patriot*.

It was unsuitable to the nicety required in short compositions to close his verse with the word *too*; every rhyme should be a word of emphasis, nor can this rule be safely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes slight inaccuracies excusable, or allows room for beauties sufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the seventh line the word *filled* is weak and prosaic, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

30 The thought in the last line is impertinent, having no connection with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man described. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conspirator<sup>1</sup> who died lately in prison, after

<sup>1</sup> Bernardi.

a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved against him, the sentiment had been just and pathetical; but why should Trumbal be congratulated upon his liberty who had never known restraint?

## III.

*On the Hon. Simon Harcourt, only son of the Lord Chancellor Harcourt, at the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordshire, 1720.*

‘To this sad shrine, whoe’er thou art, draw near,  
Here lies the friend most lov’d, the son most dear: 10  
Who ne’er knew joy, but friendship might divide,  
Or gave his father grief but when he died.

How vain is reason, eloquence how weak!  
If Pope must tell what Harcourt cannot speak.  
Oh, let thy once-lov’d friend inscribe thy stone,  
And with a father’s sorrows mix his own!’

The epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inserted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance must concur with genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with 20 servile imitation.

I cannot but wish that, of this inscription, the two last lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the sense.

## IV.

*On James Craggs, Esq. In Westminster Abbey.*

‘ JACOBUS CRAGGS,

REGI MAGNAE BRITANNIÆ A SECRETIS

ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS

PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPULI AMOR ET DELICIAE:

VIXIT TITULIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR,

ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV.

OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX.’

‘ Statesman, yet friend to truth ! of soul sincere,  
 In action faithful, and in honour clear !  
 Who broke no promise, serv’d no private end,  
 Who gain’d no title, and who lost no friend ;  
 Ennobled by himself, by all approv’d,  
 Prais’d, wept, and honour’d, by the Muse he lov’d.’

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph, and therefore some faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are torn from the poem that first contained them. We may, however, observe some defects. There is a redundancy of words in the first couplet; it is superfluous to tell of him who was *sincere, true, and faithful*, that he was *in honour clear*.

There seems to be an opposition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious; where is the relation between the two positions, that he *gained no title* and *lost no friend*?

It may be proper here to remark the absurdity of joining, in the same inscription, Latin and English, or verse and prose. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be used, for no reason can be given why part of the information should be given in one tongue, and part in another on a tomb, more than in any other place, or any other occasion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verse, and then to call in the help of prose, has always the appearance of a very artless expedient, or of an attempt unaccomplished. Such an epitaph resembles the conversation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by signs.

## V.

*Intended for Mr. Rowe. In Westminster Abbey.*

‘ Thy relics, Rowe, to this fair urn we trust,  
 And sacred, place by Dryden’s awful dust :  
 Beneath a rude and nameless stone he lies,  
 To which thy tomb shall guide inquiring eyes.

Peace to thy gentle shade, and endless rest!  
 Blest in thy genius, in thy love too blest!  
 One grateful woman to thy fame supplies  
 What a whole thankless land to his denies.

Of this inscription the chief fault is that it belongs less to Rowe, for whom it was written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and indeed gives very little information concerning either.

To wish *peace to thy shade* is too mythological to be admitted into a Christian temple; the ancient worship has 10 infected almost all our other compositions, and might therefore be contented to spare our epitaphs. Let fiction, at least, cease with life, and let us be serious over the grave.

## VI.

*On Mrs. Corbet, who died of a Cancer in her Breast.*

• Here rests a woman, good without pretence,  
 Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense;  
 No conquest she, but o'er herself desir'd;  
 No arts essay'd, but not to be admir'd.  
 Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,  
 Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own. 20  
 So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,  
 So firm, yet soft, so strong, yet so refin'd,  
 Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried;  
 The saint sustained, but the woman died.

I have always considered this as the most valuable of all Pope's epitaphs: the subject of it is a character not discriminated by any shining or eminent peculiarities; yet that which really makes, though not the splendour, the felicity of life, and that which every wise man will choose for his final 30 and lasting companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs weary and disgusted from the ostentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of such a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay despise, it was fit that

the value should be made known, and the dignity established. Domestic virtue, as it is exerted without great occasions, or conspicuous consequences, in an even unnoted tenor, required the genius of Pope to display it in such a manner as might attract regard and enforce reverence. Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verses?

If the particular lines of this inscription be examined, it will appear less faulty than the rest. There is scarce one line taken from commonplaces, unless it be that in which *only Virtue* is said to be *our own*. I once heard a lady of great beauty and excellence object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyric. Of this let the ladies judge.

## VII.

*On the Monument of the Hon. Robert Digby, and of his Sister Mary, erected by their Father the Lord Digby, in the Church of Sherborne in Dorsetshire, 1727.*

20     'Go ! fair example of untainted youth,  
      Of modest wisdom and pacific truth :  
      Compos'd in sufferings, and in joy sedate,  
      Good without noise, without pretension great.  
      Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,  
      Who knew no wish but what the world might hear:  
      Of softest manners, unaffected mind,  
      Lover of peace, and friend of human kind :  
      Go, live ! for heaven's eternal year is thine,  
      Go, and exalt thy mortal to divine.

30     And thou, blest maid ! attendant on his doom,  
      Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,  
      Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,  
      Not parted long, and now to part no more !  
      Go, then, where only bliss sincere is known !  
      Go, where to love and to enjoy are one !

Yet take these tears, Mortality's relief,  
And till we share your joys, forgive our grief :  
These little rites, a stone, a verse receive,  
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give !'

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indiscriminate character, and of the sister tells nothing but that she died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praise. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer; for the greater part of mankind *have no character at all*, have little that distinguishes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be said of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thousand more. It is indeed no great panegyric, that there is inclosed in this tomb one who was born in one year and died in another; yet many useful and amiable lives have been spent, which yet leave little materials for any other memorial. These are, however, not the proper subjects of poetry; and whenever friendship, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on such subjects, he must be forgiven if he sometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the same praises over different tombs.

The scantiness of human praises can scarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he composed, found it necessary to borrow from himself. The fourteen epitaphs which he has written comprise about a hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will easily be found in all the rest of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is scarce any thought or word which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the strongest and most elegant, is borrowed from Dryden. The conclusion is the same with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

## VIII.

*On Sir Godfrey Kneller. In Westminster Abbey, 1723.*

Kneller, by Heaven, and not a master taught,  
Whose art was nature, and whose pictures thought;  
Now for two ages, having snatch'd from fate  
Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great,  
Lies crown'd with Princes' honours, Poets' lays,  
Due to his merit, and brave thirst of praise.  
Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie  
Her works; and dying, fears herself may die.

Of this epitaph the first couplet is good, the second not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word *crowned* not being applicable to the *honours* or the *lays*, and the fourth is not only borrowed from the epitaph on Raphael, but of very harsh construction.

## IX.

*On General Henry Withers. In Westminster Abbey, 1729.*

Here, Withers, rest! thou bravest, gentlest mind,  
Thy country's friend, but more of human kind.  
O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd!  
O! soft humanity in age belov'd!  
For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear,  
And the gay courtier feels the sigh sincere.

Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove  
Thy martial spirit, or thy social love!  
Amidst corruption, luxury, and rage,  
Still leave some ancient virtues to our age:  
Nor let us say (those English glories gone)  
The last true Briton lies beneath this stone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another instance of commonplaces, though somewhat diversified by mingled qualities and the peculiarity of a profession.

The second couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleasing; exclamation seldom succeeds in our language; and I think

it may be observed that the particle O! used at the beginning of a sentence always offends.

The third couplet is more happy: the value expressed for him, by different sorts of men, raises him to esteem; there is yet something of the common cant of superficial satirists, who suppose that the insincerity of a courtier destroys all his sensations, and that he is equally a dissembler to the living and the dead.

At the third couplet I should wish the epitaph to close, but that I should be unwilling to lose the two next lines, 10 which yet are dearly bought if they cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

## X.

*On Mr. Elijah Fenton. At Easthampstead in Berkshire,*

1730.

'This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,  
May truly say, Here lies an honest man:  
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,  
Whom Heaven kept sacred from the Proud and Great:  
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,  
Content with science in the vale of peace.  
Calmly he look'd on either life; and here  
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;  
From Nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,  
Thank'd Heaven that he had liv'd, and that he died.'

The first couplet of this epitaph is borrowed from Crashaw. The four next lines contain a species of praise peculiar, original, and just. Here, therefore, the inscription should have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wise and good. The character 30 of Fenton was so amiable, that I cannot forbear to wish for some poet or biographer to display it more fully for the advantage of posterity. If he did not stand in the first rank of genius, he may claim a place in the second; and whatever

criticism may object to his writings, censure could find very little to blame in his life.

## XI.

*On Mr. Gay. In Westminster Abbey, 1732.*

• 10     'Of manners gentle, of affections mild;  
 In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:  
 With native humour tempering virtuous rage,  
 Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:  
 Above temptation, in a low estate,  
 And uncorrupted, e'en among the Great:  
 A safe companion, and an easy friend,  
 Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end.  
 These are thy honours! not that here thy bust  
 Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;  
 But that the worthy and the good shall say,  
 Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies GAY.'

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more successfully executed than the rest, for it will not always happen that the success of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The same observation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by causes wholly out of the performer's power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by sudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himself, and which sometimes rise when he expects them least.

The two parts of the first line are only echoes of each other; *gentle manners and mild affections*, if they mean anything, must mean the same.

30     That Gay was a *man in wit* is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The *wit of man*, and the *simplicity of a child*, make a poor and vulgar contrast, and raise no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet *rage* is less properly introduced after the mention of *mildness* and *gentleness*, which are made the constituents of his character; for a man so *mild* and *gentle* to *temper his rage*, was not difficult.

The next line is unharmonious in its sound, and mean in its conception; the opposition is obvious, and the word *lash* used absolutely, and without any modification, is gross and improper.

To be *above temptation* in poverty, and *free from corruption* among the great, is indeed such a peculiarity as deserved notice.<sup>10</sup> But to be a *safe companion* is praise merely negative, arising not from the possession of virtue, but the absence of vice, and that one of the most odious.

As little can be added to his character by asserting that he was *lamented in his end*. Every man that dies is, at least by the writer of his epitaph, supposed to be lamented, and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The first eight lines have no grammar; the adjectives are without any substantive, and the epithets without a subject.

The thought in the last line, that Gay is buried in the bosoms of the *worthy* and the *good*, who are distinguished only to lengthen the line, is so dark that few understand it; and so harsh, when it is explained, that still fewer approve.

## XII.

*Intended for Sir Isaac Newton. In Westminster Abbey.*

‘ISAACUS NEWTONIUS:

Quem Immortalem

Testantur, *Tempus, Natura, Coelum:*

Mortalem

Hoc marmor fatetur.

30

Nature, and Nature’s laws, lay hid in night,  
God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light.

Of this epitaph, short as it is, the faults seem not to be

very few. Why part should be Latin and part English it is not easy to discover. In the Latin the opposition of *Immortalis* and *Mortalis* is a mere sound or a mere quibble; he is not *immortal* in any sense contrary to that in which he is *mortal*.

In the verses the thought is obvious, and the words *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

### XIII.

*On Edmund Duke of Buckingham, who died in the 19th Year  
of his Age, 1735.*

10     'If modest youth, with cool reflection crown'd,  
And every opening virtue blooming round,  
Could save a parent's justest pride from fate,  
Or add one patriot to a sinking state,  
This weeping marble had not ask'd thy tear,  
Or sadly told how many hopes lie here!  
The living virtue now had shone approv'd,  
The senate heard him, and his country lov'd.  
Yet softer honours, and less noisy fame  
Attend the shade of gentle Buckingham:  
In whom a race for courage fam'd and art,  
Ends in the milder merit of the heart;  
And, chiefs or sages long to Britain given,  
Pays the last tribute of a saint to heaven.'

20     This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the rest, but I know not for what reason. To *crown* with *reflection* is surely a mode of speech approaching to nonsense. *Opening virtues blooming round*, is something like tautology; the six following lines are poor and prosaic. *Art* is in another couplet used for *arts*, so that a rhyme may be had to *heart*. The six last lines are the best, but not excellent.

The rest of his sepulchral performances hardly deserve the notice of criticism. The contemptible 'Dialogue' between *HE* and *SHE* should have been suppressed for the author's sake.

In his last epitaph, 'On Himself,' in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wise men serious, he confounds the living man with the dead :—

‘Under this stone, or under this sill,  
Or under this turf,’ &c.

When a man is once buried, the question under what he is buried is easily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a state of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

10

The world has but little new ; even this wretchedness seems to have been borrowed from the following tuneless lines :—

‘Ludovici Ariosti humantur ossa  
Sub hoc marmore, vel sub hac humo, seu  
Sub quicquid voluit benignus haeres,  
Sive haerede benignior comes, seu  
Opportunus incidens Viator :  
Nam scire haud potuit futura, sed nec  
Tanti erat vacuum sibi cadaver  
Ut urnam cuperet parare vivens.  
Vivens ista tamen sibi paravit,  
Quae inscribi voluit suo sepulchro,  
Olim siquod haberet is sepulchrum.’

20

Surely Ariosto did not venture to expect that his trifle would have ever had such an illustrious imitator.



## NOTES.

### THE LIFE OF DRYDEN.

[P. SS. refers to a few proof-sheets corrected in MS. by Johnson himself, and preserved in the British Museum, which have been compared, as far as they go, with the texts as above.]

Page 3, line 1. *about*. 'now,' P. SS.

1. 3. *display*. 'account,' P. SS.

1. 5. *nothing*. 'no more,' P. SS.

*beyond what*. 'than,' P. SS.

1. 6. *casual mention and uncertain tradition*. 'On reviewing the received accounts of his life and writings I found so much inaccuracy and uncertainty that I soon resolved to take nothing upon trust, but to consider the subject as wholly new.' (Advertisement to Malone's Life of Dryden.) 'Unfortunately this anathema upon all before him in the same career (like that of the hair-dresser, who laments with generous pity the misconduct of your head before you sent for him) attaches itself, in part, upon the celebrated writer of the same life, Dr. Johnson, deceased. But that he is "deceased" can alone account for it; for I doubt whether Malone, valiant as he is, would have written these comments (which are like a wasp's tail in the nose of a giant) upon so irritable a personage.' Essence of Malone, by Minutius Felix, 1800. In spite of this satire upon the hypercritical industry of Malone, there can be no doubt that Johnson's characteristic aversion from a steady and prolonged exertion of his powers prevented his making a very close investigation of the worth of the 'casual mention' and 'uncertain tradition.' It must always be remembered that the Lives of the Poets was a work undertaken for the booksellers, written to order, and regarded by Johnson as a piece of taskwork.

1. 6. *beyond what*. 'than,' P. SS.

1. 7. 1631. There was thus just about 150 years between the birth of Dryden and the publication of this life by Johnson, which appeared in 1779.

1. 8. *Oundle*. After Oundle read 'was.' 1st edit.

l. 12. *reported*. ‘said,’ P. SS.

*Derrick.* Mr. Derrick’s life of Dryden was prefixed to a very incorrect edition of Dryden’s *Miscellanies*, published by the Tonsons in 1760, 4 vols. 8vo. Derrick’s part was poorly executed, and the edition never became popular.

l. 13. *two hundred.* It was really £60, as proved by Malone.

l. 14. *Anabaptist.* This word is not given in the first edition of Johnson’s *Dictionary*. The Anabaptists were a sect (the name of which is now corrupted to ‘Baptists’) of very early origin in England. They can be traced among the Lollards and the original Independents, out of which latter church the Baptists first came forth as a distinct sect. Their numbers increased greatly during the Civil War, many of the soldiers who fought under Cromwell and Monk professing their faith. They afterwards considered that their cause had been betrayed by Cromwell; they protested against the imprisonment of Biddle (Crosby, vol. iii. p. 231), and were firm advocates of liberty of conscience. ‘The Anabaptists,’ says Burnet (*History of his Own Time*, i. p. 701), ‘were generally men of virtue and of an universal charity.’ Thus the English Anabaptists must not be confounded with the Anabaptists of Germany in the sixteenth century, who united Socialism, Communism, and Polygamy to their religious doctrines, possessed themselves of the city of Münster, and were only subdued after a long siege, 1536.

l. 15. *no authority.* Derrick’s authority may have been the reproaches afterwards mentioned (*infra*, l. 22), as for instance Langbaine, ‘Account of the Dramatic Poets,’ p. 139. ‘He (Dryden) has ridiculed the several professions of Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Huguenots, Anabaptists, Independents, Quakers, &c., though I must observe by the way that some people among the persuasions here mentioned might justly have expected better usage from him on account of his old acquaintance in the year 1659.’ Langbaine’s ‘Account’ was first published in 1691. So also in the ‘Reflections on the pretended Parallel in the play called the “Duke of Guise,”’ an attack on him attributed to T. Shadwell (published 1683), we read—‘And ’tis not enough when he meets some of his old acquaintances (whom he knows to be of an opinion he once professed to be of, and much different from what he now pretends),’ &c.

l. 21. *patrimony.* In the first edition the rest of this paragraph reads thus:—‘or considered as a deserter from another party (or religion). I am inclined therefore to think that Derrick was misinformed.’

l. 26. *Dr. Busby.* Dr. Busby was one of those masters who seem to have won respect by extreme severity. Cf. the notice of Dryden’s life prefixed to his *Select Works* in this series—‘Our master Busby used to whip a boy so long till he made him a confirmed blockhead.’ Cf. also Johnson’s answer when asked how he obtained so much learning in spite of his habitual sluggishness—‘Sir, my master whipped me very

well.' Boswell's 'Life,' Malone's edition, 1853, p. 7. Johnson approved of this kind of discipline and regretted its disuse. Cf. Boswell, 'Life,' anno 1775. 'There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there; so that what the boys get at one end they lose at the other.' Cf. also, on the other side, Herbert Spencer, 'On the Study of Sociology' in the International Scientific Series, p. 190: 'It may be needful, therefore, that our boys should be accustomed to harsh treatment, giving and receiving brutal punishments without too nice a consideration of their justice. . . . So that a certain brutalization has to be maintained during our passing phase of civilization.' See also the same author's chapter on 'The Rights of Children' in his 'Social Statics.'

P. 4, l. 4. *Lord Hastings.* This Lord Hastings had been a scholar at Westminster, and his great promise of excellence caused a special grief to be felt at his early death in 1649 from small-pox. He was the son of the Earl of Huntingdon, heir to the Duke of Clarence, brother to King Edward IV. Cf. Select Dryden, Clar. Press Series, Introduction, p. xiii.

1. 5. *conceits.* *Conceit* here = an *unexpected turn of fancy*. Johnson quotes for the meaning 'sentiment as distinguished from imagery,' Pope's lines :

'Some to conceit alone their works confine  
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line.'

Essay on Criticism, 289.

The conceits here complained of were fantastical expressions of comparisons between things as unlike as possible. For the 'example of Cowley' cf. Johnson's life of that poet, where he says:—'About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets. . . . The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to shew their learning was their whole endeavour: but unluckily resolving to shew it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry they only wrote verses. . . . Their thoughts are often new but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering how he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of ingenuity they were ever found. . . . The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together, nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased. . . . Milton tried the metaphysical style only in his lines on Hobson the Carrier; Cowley adopted it and excelled his predecessors, having as much sentiment and more music.' As an example, among many others, Johnson himself quotes Cowley:—

'All armed in brass, the richest dress of war  
(A dismal glorious sight!) he shone afar.

The sun himself started with sudden fright  
 To see his beams returned so dismal bright.'

Cowley, says Johnson, was almost the last of that race, and undoubtedly the best.

1. 11. *constellation.* The termination *-tion* was then pronounced as a dissyllable. Compare the lines p. 75:

'Nor is it duty on our hope alone  
 Creates that joy but full fruition.'

Compare also the full note there given.

1. 22. *Oxford to him.* These lines were probably only a passing compliment, intended to please the immediate audience before whom they were to be recited. Cf. the Introduction to Dryden's works in this Series, p. xiv.

1. 26. *It was not.* This is not correct. The poem on the Death of Lord Hastings had already appeared in a volume entitled 'Tears of the Muses on the Death of Henry, Lord Hastings,' 1649.

1. 29. *Sprat and Waller.* The productions of the three poets were bound together. For a notice of Sprat and Waller see Introduction to Dryden, Clar. Press Series, p. xviii.

1. 31. *panegyrists of usurpation.* Johnson's political position may perhaps best be described as that of a consistent Monarchist. In this he never altered, though he could drop the 'fierce Jacobitism' which accompanied it in his youth. After the receipt of his pension he became a partisan of the Hanoverian family, and we soon after find him suggesting a ducking as a remedy for a man who attacked public measures and the royal family. But the modern reader must not forget that the royal measures were innovations mostly, and that the 'Whig dogs,' as Johnson called them, would perhaps now mostly vote on what is commonly known as the Conservative side in politics. Cf. the Introduction to Burke's 'Thoughts on the Present Discontents' in this Series. Johnson never loses the chance of an assault on the opponents of the reigning sovereign; cf. his Life of Waller, where, mentioning the speech made by Waller in 1640, he says:—'The King's demand of a supply produced one of those noisy speeches which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances.'

P. 5, l. 5. *It was, however.* For instance, in 1681 Dryden's political opponents published a reprint of his 'Heroique Stanzas on the late Lord Protector,' under the title of 'An Elegy on the Death of the late Usurper O. Cromwell,' the object of which publication was to injure Dryden with his new political allies and at court. This was printed in the form of a folio broadside; it was 'published to show the loyalty and integrity of the poet,' and it has the following lines as a 'postscript,'

'The printing of these lines afflicts me more  
 Than all the drubs I in Rose Alley bore;

This shows my nauseous mercenary pen  
Would praise the vilest and the worst of men.'

So also in the Protestant Satire (1687) we read:

'Thus needy Bayes, his Rose Street aches past,  
By Fate enlightened, Tory turns at last;  
Though bred a saint he was not born to fast';

where Bayes is a nickname for Dryden, derived from the farce of the Rehearsal, 1671. Cf. note on the Rehearsal, p. 7, l. 4. For 'Rose Street aches' see the account of the assault on Dryden, given in the Introduction to his works, Clar. Press Series, p. xxx.

1. 8. *same year*. Should be 'next year,' 1661.

1. 15. *darkness and cold*. 'Darkness' and 'cold' are subjects in this sentence. We should say 'darkness is certainly privation and cold probably so.' Johnson's strong classical tendencies most likely caused him thus to put the emphatic word *last*. This elaborate justification of Dryden's diction will not stand. Cf. the note on the passage in the 'Select Works of Dryden' in this Series, where is quoted the following from the poem 'News from Hell,' by Captain Radcliffe:—

'Laureate, who was both learned and florid,  
Was damned long since for "silence horrid";  
Nor had there been such clutter made  
But that this silence did invade.  
In invade! and so it might well, that's clear,  
But what did it invade?—an ear!'

There are some phrases of which it may be said, as J. S. Mill remarked of the expression 'exchangeable value,' that no amount of authority which can be quoted for them can make them good English. So also in the Fourth Letter by Martin Clifford the passage was again attacked. Cf. note on p. 17, l. 25.

1. 19. *also*. 'only,' P. SS.

1. 24. *commonly*. 'always,' P. SS. After dedication read 'and' P. SS.

1. 26. *easily*. 'always,' P. SS.

1. 28. *The time at which*. The 'Wild Gallant' was probably first exhibited in 1662 or 1663. See Malone, p. 53. But the 'Duke of Guise' had been composed before this and laid aside on the advice of friends.

P. 6, l. 16. *the critics*. Among them the following from Pepys' Diary: 'Took coach and to court and there saw the "Wild Gallant" performed by the King's house, but it was ill acted, and the play so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life, almost, and so little answering the names that from the beginning to the end I could not, nor can at this time, tell certainly which was the "wild Gallant." 1662-3.

1. 17. *were*. 'was,' P. SS.

1. 19. *dramatic*. 'theatrical,' P. SS. After 'performances' the first edition reads 'and indeed there is the less as they do not appear in the collection to which this narration is to be annexed.'

1. 20. *especial*. 'particular,' P. SS. For those read 'some,' P. SS.  
 1. 23. *eight-and-twenty*. 'four-and-twenty,' P. SS.

1. 26. *Earl of Orrery*. This was Roger Boyle, first Earl of Orrery, author of *Parthenissa* (1654), which was an attempt to imitate the French romances which were afterwards to become so much in vogue at the court of Charles II. He also introduced the fashion—this too borrowed from the French—of writing heroic plays or plays in rhyme. Cf. p. 6, l. 29. His first productions in this way were the 'History of Henry V' and 'Mustapha, a Tragedy.'

1. 28. *dramatic rhyme*. Only a portion of the 'Rival Ladies' was in rhyme, and that a small portion;—all but parts of the third and fourth acts being in unrhymed measure. Dryden's defence of rhyme is interesting from the line of argument taken. He argues that the dignity of tragedy requires rhyme, and he does not fear to say that Shakespeare wrote blank verse to save himself the trouble of rhyming. Sir Robert Howard, who was opposed to Dryden in opinion on this question, also took it for granted that blank verse was too mean a measure for 'a copy of verses,' and only urged that rhyme was unnatural in a play. Had Johnson better loved to study *accurately*, and investigate chronologies, he would not have missed the point here, that while Dryden was teaching his age to be too polite and too dignified for the measures of Shakespeare, at that very time Milton was winning for blank verse another immortal crown by the writing of his *Paradise Lost*, which was finished in 1665. Johnson was himself a strenuous supporter of rhyme as opposed to blank verse. Cf. Boswell, *Life*, p. 116: 'He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. *Johnson*. "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other, but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have *hugged* him." This preference however did not prevent his knowing that rhyme is unfit for tragedy. In spite of his admiration for Dryden he was not led away by an imitation of the French tragedians in a measure which Byron was afterwards to describe as 'Monotony on wires.'

1. 34. 1667. It will be important to note that this is the first edition of this play. Another was published in 1668, with a dedication of which further mention will be made. Cf. p. 8, l. 11, sq.

P. 7, l. 4. *Rehearsal*. Cf. note on p. 5, l. 5, and p. 30, l. 25, full notes. In Act i. 'Bayes. I'm sure the design's good, that cannot be deny'd. And then for language, I gad, I defie 'em all in nature, to mend it. Besides, Sir, I have printed above a hundred sheets of paper to insinuate the plot into the boxes; and withal have appointed two or three dozen of my friends to be ready in the Pit, who, I'm sure, will clap, and so

the rest, you know, must follow,' &c. Note the slight inaccuracy showing that Johnson wrote from memory, not by reference:—Johnson, 'how many reams'; Bayes, 'above a hundred sheets.'

1. 7. *Rymer*. 'Rymer, the worst critic that ever lived.' Macaulay's Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson. 'Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his tragedies. . . . Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless.' Wordsworth, Supplement to the Preface. The lines alluded to are:—

'All things are hushed, as Nature's self lay dead,  
The mountains seem to nod their drowsie head;  
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,  
And sleeping Flowers, beneath the night dew sweat;  
Even Lust and Envy sleep, yet Love denies  
Rest to my soul and slumber to my eyes.'

1. 9. *making*. Johnson's use of this word affords a good instance of the increasing tendency to specialisation in our language. Few would now 'make a play' or 'make' an article for a newspaper. The wide generality of such a word survives in phrases like 'make away with,' 'make over,' &c. Many instances may be found where this verb would now have been replaced by one of more specialised meaning; thus 'make full proof of thy ministry,' 2 Tim. iv. 5.

'Such music as before was never *made*

But when of old the sons of morning sang.'

Milton, Ode on the Nativity, 117.

'Write dull receipts how poems may be *made*.'

Pope, Essay on Criticism, 115.

1. 17. *made*. 'wrote,' P. SS.

1. 19. *making*. 'writing,' P. SS.

1. 21. *confutation of*. 'answer to,' P. SS. Cf. Introduction, Johnson's classical tendencies.

1. 32. *I am satisfied*, &c. This passage should hardly have been put in quotation marks, for it is a free condensation of what Dryden really wrote. The original may be read in the Select Dryden, p. 28.

P. 8, l. 3. *eloquence*. Here used in its proper sense. This passage is quoted by Johnson in his Dictionary, as illustrating the meaning 'eloquence, flow of language.' This is a much abused word. It means now in the mouth of the vulgar little more than 'articulation'; we have advertisements from 'Mr. So and So, Professor of Elocution, stammering and stuttering rapidly cured,' &c. But it must be remembered that the classical meaning of the word is that mastery of one's mother-tongue which alone confers force, grace, and propriety of diction on speaker or writer. Cf. p. 10, l. 29. 'For want of learning and elocution he will never be able to express anything either naturally or justly.' Cf. p. 93, l. 5.

1. 5. *Gondibert of Davenant*. Sir William Davenant (1605-1668) had

been an adherent of the Royalist party, and was living in Paris when he resolved to sail for Virginia, carrying with him his unfinished poem 'Gondibert,' on which he had already published a 'Discourse,' addressed to Thomas Hobbes. His vessel was taken by one of the Parliamentary ships, and 'Gondibert' was continued by its author in his prison at Cowes Castle in the Isle of Wight. At the Restoration he obtained his release, and proceeded to write for the stage various dramas, as the 'Siege of Rhodes,' 'Playhouse to Lette,' &c. The metre of 'Gondibert' was not invented by Davenant. It had already been used by Sir John Davies (1570-1626) in his 'Nosce Teipsum.' Cf. p. 72, l. 27, and p. 108, l. 24.

1. 8. *encumbrances.* 'difficulties,' P. SS.

1. 14. *There seems to be.* Johnson's difficulty may be cleared up by quoting the exact dates. The first defence of rhyme was in 1664; Howard's answer was in 1665. Dryden's Dialogue was published in 1667; Howard's 'Duke of Lerma' in 1668; and Dryden's answer, prefixed to the 'Indian Emperor,' was published in the same year, but at a later date. This was not in the first edition of the 'Indian Emperor,' which was published in 1667, but in the second; and even from this it was afterwards omitted at the solicitation of friends of both parties. Dryden and Howard became again good friends, and continued so till death. Malone, p. 91.

1. 29. *the same year.* Not the same year; the year after.

1. 34. *poet-laureate.* The reader who is curious to follow the history of this office will find it in Malone's Life of Dryden, pp. 78 sq. Briefly it may be said that something like the office first appears under Henry III, that the title is first used of himself by one John Kay about the year 1470, in a dedication to King Edward IV. Ben Jonson was Laureate to James I; the pension granted to him bearing the date January 1st, 1615; and Charles I, by letters patent of April 23, 1630, increased the stipend from 100 marks to 100*l.* a year, and added thereto the tierce of Canary. Jonson died in 1637, and Davenant in 1638 obtained a pension from the crown, but did not receive the specific title. Dryden succeeded Davenant after an interval of two years, the pension being made in Dryden's case retrospective, to allow Dryden to receive the salary from the date of Davenant's death to that of his successor's appointment.

P. 9, l. 5. *the same year.* The year before, 1667.

1. 6. *dialogue.* There are four characters in this piece: Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius, and Neander, identified, according to Malone, with the Earl of Dorset, Sir Robert Howard, Sir Charles Sidney, or Sedley, and Dryden himself.

1. 8. *Duke of Dorset.* He never became a duke. Johnson should have written *Earl of Dorset.* Johnson wrote his life, but forgot his title when he came to write that of Dryden.

1. 19. *Sir Martin Mar-all.* 'Sir Martin Marrall' was translated from the French by William, Duke of Newcastle, and by him presented to Dryden, who revised it and adapted it for the stage. Johnson does not seem to care to enquire how true Langbaine's statement was about translation from Voiture. The following stanza puts it beyond a doubt:—

‘My days and my nights  
Are filled to the purpose with sorrows and frights;  
From my heart still I sigh,  
And my eyes are never dry;  
So that, Cupid be praised,  
I am to the top of Love’s happiness raised.’

Sir Martin Marrall.

‘Mes jours et mes nuits  
Ont bien peu de repos et beaucoup d’ennemis;  
Je me meurs de langeur,  
J’ai le feu dans le cœur,  
Je suis amoureux,  
Et le ciel ne voit point d’amant plus heureux.’

Chanson de Voiture.

P. 10, l. 3. In the 'Tempest' of Shakspeare, Sycorax is the mother of Caliban, dead before the opening of the plot, and Miranda is the woman who has never seen a man. In the 'Tempest' as altered by Dryden and Davenant, Caliban and Sycorax are brother and sister, and Miranda is introduced to Hippolito who never before saw a woman. It seems difficult to believe that such an adaptation of Shakspeare to the court of Charles II could have coexisted with a real reverence on the part of Davenant and Dryden for Shakspeare's genius. Yet it would appear that such is nevertheless the fact. 'Shakspeare, a poet for whom he [Davenant] had particularly a high veneration, and whom he first taught me to admire.' Dryden's Preface to the *Tempest*.

1. 8. *Elkanah Settle.* Born 1648, published the 'Empress of Morocco' in 1673.

1. 12. *sculptures* = engravings.  
*preface.* Preface there was none; but the Dedication contained some sneers at Dryden.

1. 16. *Dryden . . . wrote.* This critique, if it can be dignified with such a name, was really written by John Crowne, with the help of Dryden and Shadwell. Crowne had in 1671 written 'Juliana,' and was author of seventeen plays in all. 'In my notes on a play called the "Empress of Morocco" (I call 'em mine because above three parts of four were written by me) I gave vent to more ill-nature in me than I will do again.' Crowne, Epistle before *Caligula*, a Tragedy, 1698.

1. 20. *this character.* We can only wonder that Johnson should have thought that this could be Dryden's own writing. But it will be useful to note in what a condition the art of criticism must have been when

such work as this was not too bad for Dryden's approval, and could even be attributed to himself entirely. Criticism in Dryden's time may be easily divided; it consisted of two classes only—unlimited flattery and unlimited abuse.

1. 21. *conversation* = behaviour. 'Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles.' 1 Pet. ii. 12. Cf. also, Id. i. 15, 'Holy in all manner of conversation'; and Id. iii. 2, 'Chaste conversation coupled with fear.' Cf. also, 'Injury is an *absurdity* of conversation, as absurdity is a kind of injustice in disputation.' Hobbes, *De Corpore Politico*, i. 3. 2.

1. 27. *pudder*. More commonly *pother*. Johnson agrees with Mr. Lye in deriving it from *fudur*, Icelandic, a rapid motion.

'Let the great Gods  
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads  
Find out their enemies.' Shakspeare, King Lear, iii. 2.

P. 11, l. 16. *backed*. The critic is here thinking of the older meaning of the verb 'to back,' thus—

'This roan shall be my throne.  
Well, I will back him straight.'

Shakspeare, 1 Henry IV, ii. 3.

But he should have known, and probably did know, that the meaning 'to support' had equal authority—

'Call you that backing your friends?' Id. ii. 4.

This critique hardly ought to have been Dryden's writing, for he himself wrote—

'Factious and fav'ring this or t'other side,  
Their wagers back their wishes.'

But Dryden probably thought that any stick was good enough to beat a dog.

1. 32. *Whene'er*, &c. A perfectly legitimate figure is here censured, one formed somewhat after the model of the Virgilian *prolepsis adjectivi*, e.g. 'Premit placida aequora pontus' (Aen. x. 103), i.e. 'premendo placida fuit.' Johnson himself has a good instance in his 'London':—

'With slavish tenets taint our poisoned youth.'

P. 12, l. 12. *grout*. Groats, grits; A.S. *grut*.

'King Hardicanute, 'midst Danes and Saxons stout,  
Caroused in nut-brown ale and dined on grout;  
Which dish its pristine honour still retains,  
And when each prince is crowned, in splendour reigns.'

Dr. W. King, Art. of Cookery, 1. 89.

P. 13, l. 1. *stodged*. A word which has long since become vulgar. German *steigen*, 'to go,' gives us the obsolete verb *stodge*, 'to stir,' and the kind of pudding made by stirring is still called *stodge* in the slang vernacular known to every school-boy. In this case, as in many others, slang has accidentally preserved an old and expressive word to the language.

1. 4. *physical*. Pertaining to health.

'Is Brutus sick, and is it physical

To walk unbraced and suck up the humours

Of the dank morning?' Shakspeare, Julius Cæsar, ii. 1.

1. 8. *doctor's bill*. Prescription.

'Like him that took the doctor's bill

And swallowed it instead o' th' pill.'

Butler, Hudibras, i. 1. 604.

Cf. also 'So modern 'pothecaries, taught the art  
By doctors' bills to play the doctor's part.'

Pope, Essay on Criticism, 108.

*receipt*=*recipe*. Here a mere repetition of *doctor's bill* in the same line—

'The apothecary train is wholly blind;  
From files a random *receipt* they take,  
And many deaths in one prescription make.'

Dryden, Letter to his Kinsman John.

Cf. also the line above quoted in note to p. 7, l. 11:

'Write dull receipts how poems may be made.'

Pope, Essay on Criticism, 115.

1. 25. *lanthorn*. Lat. *laterna* or *lanterna*, a case for holding a light. *Laterna* is the more common form, from which has arisen a more than doubtful etymology from *lateo*; 'intra quod lux candelæ latet.' It was often made of horn, whence the erroneous spelling *lanthorn*. Cf. the pun on the word in Midsummer Night's Dream, v. 1. 231, 'This lanthorn doth the horned moon present.'

1. 32. *a reading*. *A* is here a preposition signifying *on*. Cf. Life of Pope, p. 131, l. 7.

P. 14, l. 29. *fustian*. A common and coarse kind of cloth made of linen and cotton. Hence trumpery of any kind; vain bombastic language.

'Hold, hold, quoth she; no more of this,  
Sir knight, you take your aim amiss:  
For you will find it a hard chapter  
To catch me with poetick rapture,  
In which your mastery of art  
Doth show itself, and not your heart:  
Nor will you raise in mine combustion  
By dint of high heroick fustian.'

Butler, Hudibras, ii. 1. 583.

Cf. also Milton, Areopagitica, p. 35, Clarendon Press Series: 'Nothing had bin there writt'n now these many years but flattery and fustian.' And in Hudibras, i. 1. 98, we have the word in its literal sense:—

'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin  
Like fustian heretofore on satin.'

P. 15, l. 6. *loggerheads*. Blockheads.

'*Poins*. Where hast been, Hal?

*Prince*. With three or four loggerheads amongst three or four score hogsheads.' Shakspeare, *1 Henry IV*, ii. 4.

l. 8. *cits*. Contraction of 'citizens,' and almost always used in an unfavourable or contemptuous sense.

'Oh ye addlebrained cits, who henceforth in their wits

Would entrust their youth to your heeding;

When in diamonds and gold ye have him thus enrolled?

You know both his friends and his breeding.'

Andrew Marvell, *Letter to the Lord Mayor*.

Cf. p. 40, l. 26.

l. 13. *Gotham*. The name of a parish and village in Nottinghamshire. Near it is a place called Cuckoo Bush; the bush having been planted to commemorate the story out of which was to grow the well-known saying, the 'Wise men of Gotham,' or the 'Fools of Gotham.' The tale is thus:— 'King John passing through this place towards Nottingham, intending to go over the meadows I have just described, was prevented by the villagers; they apprehending that the ground over which a king passed was for ever after to become a public road. The king, incensed at their proceedings, sent from his court soon after some of his servants to enquire of them the reason of their incivility and ill-humour, that he might punish them by way of fine or some other way he might judge most proper. The villagers hearing of the approach of the king's servants thought of an expedient to turn away his majesty's displeasure from them: When the messengers arrived at Gotham they found some of the inhabitants engaged in endeavouring to drown an eel in a pool of water; some were employed in dragging carts upon a large barn to shade the wood from the sun; others were tumbling their cheeses down a hill that they might find the way to Nottingham for sale; and some were employed in hedging in a cuckoo which had perched upon an old bush which stood where the present one now stands; in short, they were all employed in some foolish way or other, which convinced the king's servants that it was a village of fools. Whence arose the old adage "The wise men of Gotham." ' Thoroton's *History of Nottingham*. Hence one could hardly 'land' at Gotham. The writer either did not know the origin of the saying, or the word 'land' is used here in a loose sense for 'arrive.'

l. 24. *Mock Astrologer*. The full title of this play is 'An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer.'

P. 16, l. 13. *rants of Maximin*. 'I remember some verses of my own [Maximin and Almanzor] which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, and which I wish heartily in the same fire with Statius and Chapman.' Dryden, *Dedication to the Spanish Friar*, 1681. Cf. p. 103, l. 25, 'But I knew that they were bad enough to please even when I wrote them.'

1. 20. *written before.* A mistake. *Tyrannic Love*, 1670; *Granada*, 1672.

1. 29. *malice to the parsons.* The force of Johnson's religious emotions perhaps made him over-sensitive on such points as this. There is not much malice in the sentence, and Dryden after all only states a plain historical fact.

P. 17, l. 30. *Clifford's remarks.* 'Notes on Mr. Dryden's Poems, in Four Letters by Martin Clifford, late master of the Charterhouse'; London, 1687.

P. 18, l. 7. *Ancient Pistol.* 'I remember just such another fuming Achilles in Shakspeare, one ancient Pistol, whom he avows to be a man of so fiery a temper and so impatient of injury, even from Sir John Falstaff, his captain, and a knight, that he not only disobeyed his commands about carrying a letter to Mrs. Page, but returned him an answer as full of contumely and in as opprobrious terms as he could imagine.' Clifford's Notes on Dryden.

1. 11. *Huffcap.* A blusterer, a bully. 'As for you, Colonel Huffcap, we shall try before a civic magistrate who's the greater plotter of us two, I against the State, or you against the Petticoat.' Dryden, Spanish Friar, act iv. sc. 1.

1. 20. *vindication.* 'Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco,' 1674.

P. 19, l. 6. *Dryden.* More probably Crowne. See note on p. 10, l. 16.

1. 29. *the London.* Cf. note to the Select Dryden, *Annus Mir.*, st. 151. 'The old ship the "London," one of the many of the Commonwealth, had been destroyed by fire, and the city of London now presented the king with a new ship, called "The Loyal London." This second "London" was burnt before the end of the war, when the Dutch surprised Chatham in 1667.'

P. 20, l. 5. *pother.* Cf. note to p. 10, l. 27.

1. 30. *fustian.* Cf. note to p. 14, l. 29.

P. 21, l. 1. *Move swiftly, &c.* This passage Johnson says Dryden knew to be nonsense. Cf. p. 101, l. 31: 'This inclination sometimes produced nonsense which he knew,' &c.

1. 5. *Poor Robin.* Pseudonym for William Winstanley, who published 'The Character of a Scold,' &c., and Almanacks intended to satirise the astrological predictions with which it was in his day the custom to fill this kind of publication. The almanack for 1677, 'A new kind of Almanack,' is very amusing. Thus we have 'Observations on January':—'The year begins very bad with those who are taken picking of a pocket, for it is apt to breed a crick in the neck . . . We hear little of battles or skirmishes at present unless it be among the Oyster Wives at Billingsgate.' March. 'We may probably have some wind this month which will blow very good news to him who hath a

friend lately dead and left him £500 a year lands and £1000 in money.' Again, on the eclipses of the year he says of the third eclipse: 'Now you must know that near the mountains of Sierra Nevada, and the North-West parts of America, unto them the moon's body will be half obscured; towards the end of it it may be seen in New France, Greenland, Florida, Cuba, the Pacific Ocean, &c., and in some other places where I never was, nor (by God's help) never intend to be.'

1. 20. *huff*. A piece of arrogance.

'Quoth Ralph, honour's but a word  
To swear by only in a lord;  
In others it is but a huff  
To vapour with instead of truth.'

Butler, Hudibras, ii. 2. 389.

1. 28. *fountain* means originally the source or spring of a river, its meaning of a *jet* of water being more recent.

P. 22, l. 7. *fore-right*, straight forward. Cf. 'right line' = straight line.

1. 11. *light of*. The preposition used here is now *on*. The corruption appears to have arisen from the habit of writing *on* for *of* in such phrases as 'There's an end on't,' 'a thriving gamester has but a poor trade on't' (Locke), &c. &c. Both *of* and *on* were contracted to *o*', and from these habits they may have become confused in the minds of writers who had more wit than scholarship.

1. 26. *to* = 'in comparison with.' 'There is no fool *to* the sinner.' Archbishop Tillotson.

P. 23, l. 4. *two ifs*. Cf. p. 20, l. 24.

1. 6. *Marriage-à-la-Mode*. A common title for satire, made immortal by association with the pencil of Hogarth, who published the six engravings bearing this title in April, 1745.

1. 9. 1673. First acted 1672; published 1673. Not only tradition but Johnson himself places the Earl of Rochester among Dryden's enemies (p. 30, l. 23). See also p. 33, l. 8, where the cause of the enmity is stated, and where it appears that the offence was given at a later date.

1. 16. *Sir C. Sedley* or *Sidley*, the Lisideus of the Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry. Cf. p. 9, l. 5, and note.

1. 19. *Amboyna*. The full title of this play was 'Amboyna, or the Cruelties of the Dutch to the English Merchants.'

1. 26. *declares in his Epilogue* :—

'A poet once the Spartans led to fight  
And made 'em conquer in the Muses' right.  
So would our poet lead you on this day,  
Showing your tortured fathers in his play.'

1. 27. *Tyrtæus*. In the Second Messenian War (B.C. 648-631) the Spartans being hard pressed sent to Delphi for advice. The oracle

instructed them to apply to Athens for a leader, which they did; but the Athenians, sympathising with the Messenians though unwilling to disobey the god, sent Tyrtæus, a lame man and a schoolmaster. But his warlike odes roused the Spartans to a pitch of martial ardour which ensured their success and vindicated the authority of the god. See Grote, *History of Greece*, ii. p. 188 sq.

l. 28. *second Dutch war*. This was a war declared by England against Holland in March 1672, in accordance with a secret treaty between Charles II and Louis XIV of France, by the advice of the famous 'Cabal' ministry, aided by the influence which Louise de Querouaille, afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth, had acquired over the king. France and England thus united for the conquest of Holland; but the efforts of the allies were brought to nought owing to the courage and conduct of William, Prince of Orange, at the head of the Dutch forces, and the opposition of the English House of Commons to a war they detested. Peace was concluded between England and Holland in Feb. 1674. It was after this peace that Charles II took occasion to degrade England's foreign policy to the lowest depths to which it has ever fallen by accepting an annual pension from Louis on condition of not opposing him in his further prosecution of the war.

l. 24. *Rymer's book*. This was 'The Tragedies of the Last Age considered and examined by the practice of the Ancients and by the Common Sense of all Ages. In a letter to Fleetwood Shepheard,' 1678. 'I have thought our poetry of the last age as rude as our architecture,' says this 'worst critic that ever lived'; and again, 'I will send you some reflections on that *Paradise Lost* of Milton's, which some are pleased to call a poem.' Johnson might have spoken of this author in the same terms as he did of Settle,—'Enough of Rymer.'

P. 24, l. 8. *Dryden's opinion, &c.* This opinion in some form Dryden shares with many good critics. Cf. De Quincey on the 'Porter Scene' in *Macbeth*, where this feeling is analysed and fully explained. De Quincey says:—'An action in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible by reaction. . . . Hence it is that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.' (Works, ed. 1863, vol. xv. p. 197.) This is of course a critique upon an extreme case; but it opens with a statement of a general principle of wide application, and which may almost be described as a psychological truism, being, in fact, only a particular form of the doctrine of the Relativity of Knowledge.

1. 16. *Lee.* Nathaniel Lee, 1650-1690, author of eleven plays, 'Nero' and 'The Rival Queens' being amongst those best known. His life was short and melancholy. He went mad and was four years in Bedlam, and on recovering his reason again earned his livelihood by dramatic writing, which had before overtaken his brain, and died very shortly after his release.

1. 23. *to join.* MS. notes on proof-sheets in the British Museum recommence here.

1. 31. *Leaguers.* This League was the one formed in 1576 to oppose Henry III and the Huguenots. At its head was the Duke of Guise, by whose suggestion it had been first formed in Picardy. The basis of religion gave it the greatest part of its strength; and the Parisians, who had been deeply concerned in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, were among its most ardent supporters. Each province was to raise 2000 foot and 400 horse, to be used against the Huguenots. The League slumbered after the Peace of Bergerac, 1577, till the death of the Duke of Anjou left the king of Navarre heir presumptive of Henry III. There was then a concordat signed between Queen Elizabeth, Henry of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, John Casimir, the Swiss, and the Rochellois, to maintain the Edicts of Pacification, by which favourable terms had been granted to the Huguenots, and to summon Henry III to respect them. The League now sprang up again, and from this time onwards France was the scene of a kind of triangular duel, the League, the Court, and the Huguenots fighting against each other. The Duke of Guise, as head of the Leaguers, was assassinated by order of Henry III on Christmas Day, 1588. In 1589 the two kings, Henry III and Henry of Navarre, united against the League, and were successful until the assassination of Henry III in Aug. 1589. Henry of Navarre now tried to win over the soldiers of the united armies, but they declared they would rather submit to the League than have a Huguenot king. In spite of the brilliant victory of Ivry in 1590 the League and the Catholics refused to submit unless the king would become a Catholic. In 1593 he consented to do this, and thus the League was defeated in its main purposes against the Huguenots by its proximate success in converting Henry of Navarre.

There were several Covenants famous in Scottish history. In 1581 James VI, finding Scotland threatened by a confederacy of Catholic noblemen and by Spanish intrigues, called upon his subjects to enter into a Covenant pledging themselves to renounce the papal doctrines and to defend the Scottish Church. In 1638, when Charles I was endeavouring to force the Scots to submit to his ecclesiastical policy, another Covenant was drawn up which is known as 'The Scottish National Covenant.' This was generally taken throughout Scotland, and those taking it were termed 'Covenanters.' In 1643, after the beginning of the Civil War, the parliamentary leaders sought to gain the assistance

of the Scots against the King. A revised Covenant, known as 'The Solemn League and Covenant,' was now drawn up, pledging the two nations to assist each other in the defence of their religion and liberties. It also pledged them to the reformation of religion in England 'according to the Word of God and the example of the best reformed churches,' and to endeavour to establish uniformity of worship and creed in England, Scotland, and Ireland. This Covenant was accepted by the English Parliament on September 25, 1643, and imposed by it on the nation. This third Covenant is the one referred to by Dryden.

1. 32. *the controversy.* 'a controversy,' P. SS. This controversy was a very bitter and very personal one. A pamphlet under the title 'Some reflections on the pretended parallel in the play called the Duke of Guise,' and attributed to Thomas Shadwell, was published in 1683. Here we have an attack on Dryden, the point of which is to make out that his play is really disloyal. Thus the opposition to the succession of the Duke of York was made by Dryden parallel to the refusal of the Parisians to have Henry of Navarre for king; and this pamphlet abuses Dryden for likening the English Commons to the assassins of St. Bartholomew's Day. So again in the pamphlet much anger is expressed at the parallel between 'our present gracious Majestie' and King Henry III, who had been the contriver of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. Of all this Dryden complains in his answer, called 'Vindication, or the Parallel of the French Holy League and the English League and Covenant, turned into a seditious libel against the King and her Royal Highness'; and he says, with much pith, that if it had been really intended to represent the king under the character of Henry III it would probably have resulted in the hanging up of the poet. The dispute on both sides was carried into minute details of purely ephemeral interest.

1. 34. *Albion and Albania.* That is true of Albion and *Albanius* which Johnson ascribes to 'King Arthur.' Cf. p. 28, l. 16 sq. 'In anno 1685 the opera of Albion and *Albanius* was performed, wrote by Mr. Dryden and composed by M. Grabu, this being performed on a very unlucky day, being the day the Duke of Monmouth landed in the West, the nation being in a great consternation, it was performed but six times, which, not answering half the charges they were at, involved the company very much in debt.' Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708), p. 40. The first night was the 6th of June, 1685. Johnson should have written 'Albion and *Albanius*'.

P. 25, l. 3. *The State of Innocence.* Published in 1674, the year of Milton's death. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Milton never saw Dryden's work. There is a tale, obtained by Aubrey from Milton's pupil and friend Cyriac Skinner, that Dryden visited Milton and asked his leave to make this adaptation. In the collection for the Life of Milton forming No. X of the Aubrey MSS. in the Bodleian Library,

where the authority for each memorandum precedes the memorandum, we have—

‘Mr. Skinner who was his disciple.

‘Jo. Dryden, Esq., Poet Laureate, who very much admired him and went to him to have leave to putt his *Paradise Lost* into a drama in rhyme. Mr. Milton received him civilly, and told him that he would give him leave to tagge his verses.’

The form of permission may be interpreted by Andrew Marvell’s use of the phrase in his lines ‘On Milton’s *Paradise Lost*’:—

‘Well might thou scorn thy readers to allure  
With tinkling rhyme, of thy own sense secure,  
While the Town Bayes writes all the while and spells,  
And, like a packhorse, tires without his bells.  
Their fancies like our bushy points appear:  
The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.’

1. 5. *decently*—with propriety. Johnson’s religious feelings were shocked at a representation of such persons on the stage.

1. 7. *Marvel*. Andrew Marvell (1620–1678) was long the close friend of John Milton. He maintained an unswerving political constancy throughout his life as a champion of liberty, and has left an honourable name amongst the minor poets of his time.

1. 8. *Or if, &c.* These lines are in the verses ‘On *Paradise Lost*’ which appeared originally in the 1674 edition of that poem. Johnson might well have gone further and made the poem prophetic of the real result by quoting—

‘Pardon me, mighty Poet, nor despise  
My causeless yet not impious surmise.  
But I am now convinced, and none will dare  
Within thy labours to pretend a share.  
Thou hast not missed one thought that could be fit  
And all that was improper dost omit;  
So that no room is here for writers left  
But to detect their ignorance or theft.’

1. 26. *The reason, &c.* Cf. *Life of Pope*, p. 138, l. 13, and note.

1. 31. *manuscript*. ‘written,’ P. SS.

P. 26, l. 4. *a great prince*. The Great Mogul. Cf. *Rasselas*, p. 283, l. 24.

*over nations . . . upon*. ‘at such a distance that there was no danger of his knowledge of,’ P. SS.

1. 6. *If he . . . disliked*. ‘Though if he had known and not liked,’ P. SS.

*character*. Here=representation on the stage.

1. 9. *remoteness*. ‘distance,’ P. SS.

1. 14. *often*. ‘also,’ P. SS.

1. 16. *complaint of life*. Contained in the following lines (Act iv. Sc. 1),

often quoted by Johnson, who used to say that he never passed that week of his life which he would wish to repeat were an angel to make the proposal to him. Boswell, *Life*, anno 1770:—

‘When I consider Life, ‘tis all a cheat,  
 Yet fooled with hope, men favour the deceit,  
 Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:  
 To-morrow’s falser than the former day;  
 Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest  
 With some new joys, cuts off what we possess’d.  
 Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,  
 Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain;  
 And from the dregs of life think to receive  
 What the first sprightly running could not give.  
 I’m tired with waiting for this chemic gold,  
 Which fools us young and beggars us when old.’

‘Chemic’ is frequently thus used for base metal. Cf.—

‘World, thou’rt a traitor, thou hast stamped thy base  
 And chemic metal with great Cæsar’s face.’

Quarles, *Emblems*, book ii. epigram 5.

l. 30. *given to*. ‘written for,’ P. SS.

l. 31. *the work*. ‘that work,’ P. SS.

l. 32. *admitted*. ‘committed,’ P. SS.

*of style*. ‘in style,’ P. SS.

P. 27, l. 3. *the good . . . foolish*. Johnson here makes a very clear distinction between virtue and wisdom, a distinction which he expresses in very peculiar terms. The dispute whether these two are identical or distinct is as old as ethical philosophy. Sokrates, in proclaiming that virtue can be taught, united them at one end; the modern Utilitarians, by making only those actions morally right which stand the test of practical wisdom, have united them at the other end. The chief difficulty which these last have to contend with is that our language is strong against them, and is always leading them to make a distinction between the two things which they are proving to be identical; e.g. J. S. Mill, ‘Utilitarianism,’ p. 94, ‘not simple inexpediency but injustice’; a phrase on which Sir J. Fitz-James Stephen, in ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,’ p. 202, has animadverted in terms of strong censure. Johnson’s distinction between ‘the good’ and ‘the bad’ is here far from just. It is worded so as to convey an impression that those who condemn a course of action as ‘foolish,’ i.e. those who guide their morality by considerations of expediency, are only ‘the bad.’ But quite opposite systems may produce equal actual morality, and a philosophy of expediency has been repeatedly proved consistent with the purest and most exalted character. Cf. also on this head Boswell’s *Life*, 1763, where Johnson defines the morality of an action to be in the *motive*. ‘If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up

and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but with respect to me, the action is very wrong.'

1. 4. *have censured*. 'had censured,' P.S.S.  
*despised*. Not found in the P.S.S.

1. 9. *spriteliness*. This orthography has been retained, being in Johnson's own handwriting. Cf. p. 35, l. 8.

1. 14. *yet*. Not in P.S.S.

1. 17. *formed*. We have had to *make* plays (p. 7, ll. 9 and 17), and now we have to 'form' them. The word here is used in the sense to *compile*, but such use appears improper.

1. 42. *sallies*. 'passages,' P.S.S.

*frantic dignity*. What Johnson may have meant by this is very doubtful. Taken as it stands, it would seem too *bizarre* to be correct;—a remnant of the style of those 'metaphysical poets' whom Johnson has elsewhere so severely criticised. But it is probable that this is a strongly condensed form of description of passages where the poet's efforts at dignity have totally failed, and only landed him amongst phrases which are really frantic, 'and of more noise than meaning.'

1. 25. *makes approaches*. 'makes some approaches,' P.S.S.

1. 26. *leave*. 'make,' P.S.S.

1. 30. *and this*. 'and which this,' P.S.S.

P. 28, l. 8. *Cleomenes*. See note on Southerne, below.

1. 9. *Guardian*. By Steele, in No. 45.

1. 17. *King Charles*. Then king no longer. Placing the title in this way is a sign of Johnson's political principles.

1. 18. *it does not seem*, &c. A mistake of the first edition, which Johnson himself corrects in the next sentence but one, omitting however to alter the text as it stands. The sentence commencing, 'When this was first' does not appear in the first edition. Boswell notices the carelessness with which these Lives were corrected, even after mistakes were pointed out to Johnson.

1. 21. *When this was first*. Cf. p. 24, l. 34, and note.

*When this . . . no more*. This sentence was added to the second edition by Johnson, who in correcting one mistake made another. Cf. note on p. 24, l. 34.

P. 29, l. 1. *theatrical*. 'dramatick,' P.S.S.

1. 4. *the drama was very far from*, &c. The stage will generally follow and represent the prevailing tone of manners and morality throughout the country. In the time of Charles II theatrical representations had fallen completely under the dominion of that extreme reaction from the austerity of Puritanism which characterised the court and the upper classes. But it would be a mistake to suppose that this dissoluteness of manners had no opponents left in the country. The 'grave lawyer' and the classes generally who had some credit to lose,

naturally set their faces strongly against a state of things which rendered property and person alike insecure, and made the recovery of debts a matter of doubt. And the Puritans, though now in a despised minority, still existed, still socially powerful by their numbers and their commercial importance.

1. 14. *Southerne*. Born 1660, was only twenty-two when his first play was acted. He wrote, to support the court party, 'The Loyal Brother,' intended to be taken as a compliment to the Duke of York. Cf. p. 30, l. 5, where Dryden addresses him as 'Young man.' He it was who finished 'Cleomenes' for Dryden; and in 1696 he wrote 'Oroonoko,' a play founded on the novel of the same name by Afra Behn, and intended as an attack on slavery. (Cf. p. 52, l. 28, and note.)

1. 15. *Rowe*. Nicholas Rowe (1673-1718) was author of several plays, 'Tamerlane,' 'The Fair Penitent,' 'Ulysses,' &c. He was made Poet Laureate in the reign of George I.

1. 16. *arts of improving*. Johnson alludes perhaps to Southerne, who used to solicit people to buy tickets for the performances of the plays, and use every means for the increase of his profits. Dryden was amazed to hear him own that he had made £700 by one play.

1. 23. *That praise, &c.* This sentence is worth noting for the peculiarity of its construction and balance. It is alliterative, and very nearly metrical. 'Praise is worth nothing when its price is known,' would be an heroic line. The fulsome praise of dedications was well enough known to have become almost proverbial.

'Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful satires,  
And flattery to fulsome dedicators.'

Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 592.

1. 31. *Swift . . . relates*. 'The word *relates* seems to refer to some passage in Swift's printed works; but I have in vain sought for any such observation in his very miscellaneous volumes. That Dryden regretted the success of his instructions, not in any of his printed pieces, but in conversation with Swift, was certainly Dr. Johnson's notion, by his adding—"who conversed with Dryden."—In the Preface, however, to *Albion and Albanus*, vol. ii. p. 162, we have a sentiment somewhat similar; for he says, he will not lay down the rules for writing an Opera, lest he should thus "set up some little judges, who not understanding thoroughly, would be sure to fall upon the faults, and not to acknowledge any of the beauties, an hard measure, which I have often found from false criticks." Again, in the Preface to *OEdipus*:—"But we have given you more than was necessary for a Preface; and, for aught we know, may gain no more by our instructions than that politick nation is like to do, who have taught their enemies to fight so long, that at last they are in a condition to invade them." Malone, *Life of Dryden*, p. 240, note.

P. 30, l. 4. *one for Mr. Southerne.* The writing of this prologue was the beginning of a friendship.

l. 5. *three [guineas].* 'His price for a Prologue or Epilogue is said by Dr. Warburton to have been originally four guineas; till being asked by Southerne to write one, he required six; "Not, (said he) young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap." This story, Warburton says<sup>1</sup>, was told by Southerne to him and Pope, nearly at the same time. In the Life of Southerne, however, published shortly afterwards by Shiels and the younger Cibber, on the testimony of a gentleman who had been personally acquainted with that poet, the sums are said to have been *five* and *ten* guineas; and Dr. Johnson with more probability supposes, that Dryden's original price for a Prologue was *two* guineas, and that from Southerne he demanded *three*: so difficult is it to elicit truth from any traditional tale.' Malone, Life of Dryden, p. 456.

l. 11. *four plays.* Not four, but three; and that engagement was not fulfilled. See the reprint in Malone, vol. i. p. 73, of a complaint made by the company of the king's house, that he has broken his contract; and that, after their forgiving him that offence, and helping him at his own request with a third night, he has yet given to the Duke's company his last play of *OEdipus*. This complaint is dated in 1678.

l. 14. *six complete plays.* Johnson was here misled by Langbaine. A comparison of the dates given above with the plays here named will show that only one of them, 'All for Love,' appeared for the first time in that year.

l. 18. *Lopez de Vega.* This name is in full Lope Felix de Vega-Carpio. Born 1562, died 1635. He was bred for the priesthood, but falling in love, preferred to be a soldier. Exiled soon after his marriage for wounding a noble in a duel, he returned to Spain only in time to be present at the death of his wife. He again took service, and fought on board one of the vessels in the Armada, finding time to write even in that unhappy expedition. On his return he married again, and by this marriage had two children; and also about the same time two illegitimate children, after whose birth, as is remarked by one of his biographers, Lope turned his thoughts to religion, and we hear no more of the mother. In 1609 he became a priest, a profession which did not prevent his writing highly immoral dramas. With these dramas he inundated the Spanish stage, and many of them were translated into French, and most of them were much admired. Besides these he wrote many long poems. But the quantity exceeded the quality; his dramas

<sup>1</sup> In a note (first published in 1751) on Pope's lines on Southerne's birthday, 1742:

'May Tom, whom heaven sent down to raise  
The price of Prologues and of Plays,' &c.

have much incident but little depth of thought, and he has left hardly anything that has lived long after him, or that is now well known.

1. 26. *Rehearsal*. Cf. p. 5, l. 5, note, and p. 7, l. 4. This farce was written by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, aided probably by Butler, author of *Hudibras*, and several others. It was originally published in 1672, a year after it was first played, and by this time additions had been made to it; a fact which explains Johnson's difficulty about the dates, and the allusions to 'Granada' and the 'Assignation.' The two parts of 'Granada' were performed in 1669 and 1670, 'Tyrannic Love' was printed in 1670, the allusions to the 'Assignation,' 1673, were added in later editions, and to 'Marriage-à-la-Mode' there is no reference in the *Rehearsal*. Dryden in this play was ridiculed under the name of Bayes, an allusion to him as Laureate. The name stuck to him ever after. The intention mentioned by Johnson 'to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever it might be' (p. 31, l. 23), is clearly shown by the allusions to other poets, given in the text, and by the fact that the farce was afterwards adapted to Pope. The 'Rehearsal' was really aimed at the rhyming plays of the time; and so far it certainly fought on the right side. Smith from the country, and Johnson of the town, meet, talk of plays, &c., and encounter Bayes who is going to see the rehearsal of one of his own plays. Bayes offers to take them with him, and the rehearsal is sketched with the comments of all three.

P. 31, l. 1. *To adjust, &c.* Cf. Introduction, p. ix.

1. 13. *Davenant*. Thus in the *Rehearsal*, Act ii. sc. 1: 'Bayes. Instead of beginning with a scene that discovers some of the plot, I begin this with a whisper.' So in Davenant's 'Play House to Lett': 'Drake Sen. 'Draw up our men, and in low whispers give our orders out.'

1. 16. *one passage*. Many more than one. Here Johnson's disinclination to close application shows itself again.

1. 22. *Sir Robert Howard*. There is very little sign of this left in the play, if it be true, which is hardly likely, as Sir Robert Howard was himself an opponent of rhyming tragedies.

1. 27. *cant*. The proper meaning of the word *cant* is that corrupt dialect used by beggars and thieves when they do not wish to be understood by the uninitiated. It is connected with the French *chanter*; *chaunter* being still known as an old word for a *pedlar*, a word itself similarly connected with *patter*. From the meaning above given *cant* comes to imply any expressions appropriated to a class or profession; hence words used by a man, not from conviction but because he belongs to a certain class, are also called *cant*, which word thus comes to be applied to the language of hypocrisy generally. 'Astrologes with an old paltry *cant* of a few pothooks for planets to amuse the vulgar.' Swift, 'Predictions for the year 1701.'

1. 31. *Lamotte*. Charles Lamotte published in 1730 his 'Essay on Poetry and Painting, with relation to History.' Johnson doubtless

quoted from memory, for there does not appear to be any such passage in the essay.

P. 32, l. 1. *Prince Volscius in a single boot.* Act iii. sc. 2.  
'VOLSCIUS sits down.'

Vol. How has my passion made me Cupid's scoff,  
This hasty boot is on, the other off,  
And sullen lies with amorous design  
To quit loud fame and make that beauty mine.  
My legs, the emblem of my various thought,  
Show to what sad distraction I am brought.  
Sometimes with stubborn honour like this boot  
My mind is guarded and resolved to do't.  
Sometimes again that very mind by love  
Disarmed like this other boot does prove.

John. What pains Mr. Bayes takes to act this speech himself.

Smith. I, the fool, I see, is mightily transported with it.

Vol. Shall I to honour or to love give way?  
Go on, cries Honour, tender Love says nay.  
Honour aloud commands, Pluck both boots on,  
But softer Love does whisper Put on none.  
What shall I do, what conduct shall I find  
To lead me through this twilight of my mind?  
For as bright day with black approach of night  
Contending, makes a doubtful puzzling light,  
So does my honour and my love together  
Puzzle me so I can resolve on neither.'

l. 9. *Empress of Morocco.* Cf. p. 10, l. 6, and note.

l. 21. *He is always, &c.* Johnson himself cared little for hostile critics. He always said that the one thing an author has to fear is neglect, and that abuse is sometimes serviceable.

P. 33, l. 5. *eight-and-twenty.* To make up this number the 'Indian Queen' is included, only part of which was Dryden's.

l. 13. *never discovered.* They were never discovered in spite of the most energetic measures taken to that end. A reward of £50 is advertised in the 'London Gazette' for Dec. 29, 1679.

l. 16. *Art of Poetry.* The proper title is 'Essay on Poetry.'

l. 30. *literature.* This word is here used in its original sense of skill in letters. Cf. p. 40, l. 10.

P. 34, l. 2. *one was the work.* Two were by Dryden, and one by him and Mulgrave.

l. 11. *Jonson, Sandys, Holyday.* Cp. p. 69, l. 10 sq.

Ben Jonson (1573-1637). 'All translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads: First, that of metaphrase, or turning an author word by word and line by line from one language into another. Thus,

or near this manner, was Horace his Art of Poetry translated by Ben Jonson.' Dryden, Preface to Ovid's Epistles. Cf. p. 70, l. 3.

George Sandys (1577-1644) published a translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses in 1626.

Dr. Barten Holyday (1593-1661) translated Juvenal and Persius into feeble English verse.

l. 15. *a different practice.* 'There is undoubtedly a mean to be preserved. Dryden saw very early that closeness best preserved the author's sense, and that freedom best exhibited his spirit; he therefore will deserve the highest praise who can give a representation at once faithful and pleasing, who can convey the same thoughts with the same graces, and who, when he translates, changes nothing but the language.' Johnson, Idler, No. 69.

l. 17. *Absalom and Achitophel.* The object of this poem was to secure the condemnation of Shaftesbury, who was accused of being one of those who instigated Monmouth to aspire to the Crown. This object was not attained, the grand jury threw out the bill, and a medal was struck to commemorate the event. Of this medal we shall hear again. Cf. p. 35, l. 20.

l. 24. *my father.* Johnson here quotes his authority. Cf. Introduction, p. viii. Cf. also Boswell, Life, *ad init.*

l. 25. *Sacheverell's trial.* In the year 1709 the struggle was at its height between Harley and the adherents of Marlborough. The queen, favouring Harley, had been obliged to give way, and Harley had been dismissed from his office of Secretary of State. But he only waited a chance to return, having with him both the royal favour and the popular feeling. Just at this juncture Dr. Sacheverell preached, on Nov. 5, before the Lord Mayor and aldermen, a sermon, at St. Paul's, in which he attacked the ministry in the most violent terms. The sermon was printed and 40,000 copies sold in a few weeks. The ministry impeached him and he was tried in Westminster Hall. But this drew out such a great popular manifestation in his favour that the queen felt strong enough gradually to effect the changes in the ministry she had long desired. Johnson must intend to allude to the sale of the sermon when he speaks of the sale of the trial, for though the trial was printed, and contained the speech in defence spoken by Sacheverell, and supposed to have been composed for him by bishop Atterbury, there is no record, as in the case of the sermon, of any very enormous sale. Cf. Life of Pope, p. 166, l. 8, and note.

l. 26. *Addison.* 'Addison has nowhere that I can find expressly mentioned the poem of Absalom and Achitophel; I suppose therefore that Dr. Johnson alluded to the 567th paper of the "Spectator," on the art of rendering party-writing more taking than ordinary by printing initial letters instead of proper names, or omitting all the vowels in a great man's name, which last method is said to have been introduced by

Tom Brown of "facetious memory." Malone, Prose Works of Dryden, ii. 292.

P. 35, l. 6. *Somers*. Can hardly have been the author, as he contributed a translation of one of the epistles to what is known as Dryden's Ovid.

l. 15. *Azaria and Hushai* was by S. Pordage, who replied to Dryden 'with a temperance rare in the controversies of the time.' (Morley, First Sketch, p. 717.) 'Absalom Senior,' or 'Absalom and Achitophel Transposed,' was by Settle. Settle wrote—

'In gloomy times when priestcraft bore the sway

And made heaven's gate a lock to their own key';

meaning, of course, making for the gate a new lock to fit the key they had; so Dryden intentionally misunderstanding him—

'Instinct he follows, and no further knows,

For to write verse with him is to transpose.

'Twere pity treason at his door to lay

Who makes heaven's gate a lock to its own key.'

Absalom and Achitophel, pt. ii, l. 444.

l. 20. *Medal*. Cf. p. 34, l. 17, note; and p. 84, l. 6.

l. 27. *The Medal Reversed*. This was not by Settle, but by Pordage. It was, like the other answer by the same hand, moderate in its tone. The full title was 'The Medal Reversed, a Satire against Persecution.' This must not be confounded with 'The Medal of John Bayes,' by Shadwell, a brutal attack on Dryden which had not even cleverness to recommend it.

l. 29. *Such are the revolutions of fame, &c.* We have here expressed in plain terms the doctrine which in the 'Rasselas' Johnson embedded in allegory. The high moral courage which is the key to Johnson's character (cf. Introduction, p. vi) enabled him to boldly look face to face at the realities of life, whose sternest lessons he had learnt by heart. Thus whilst his early habits were too strong to allow of his religious faith being shaken, failure and evil were realities to him also; nor does his faith ever sink to the level of an optimist fatalism.

P. 36, l. 8. *second part of*. This second part was not by Dryden, but by Nahum Tate, who translated the Psalms into English verse, and afterwards became Poet Laureate. Cf. p. 84, l. 1, where Dryden's contribution to his poem is mentioned.

l. 11. *he was the last*. This is also mentioned by Boswell, where Wilkes makes the same remark. Life, 1776.

l. 15. *meanest zealot*. Here we have Johnson's power of seeing two sides of a question, which in his calm moments is too strong for even his wealth of prejudice. Though himself a monarchist, he thinks this praise of Jefferies worthy of the 'meanest zealot' for prerogative.

l. 17. Johnson's dislike to investigation.

l. 27. *Sir Kenelm Digby*. Son of Sir Everard Digby, who had been

executed for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. Kenelm was knighted by James I, and held various offices under Charles I. He commanded a squadron against the Venetians in 1628, and was converted to Roman Catholicism about 1636. Put in prison by the Parliament at the commencement of the civil war, he regained his liberty in 1643 and went to France, returning after Cromwell had become Protector. The argumentative bearing of his case upon Dryden's is at first sight a little obscure. Johnson means to enforce his position that 'at any other time' Dryden's conversion 'might have passed with little censure.' No one doubts the sincerity of Sir Kenelm Digby's conversion, because it was against his own interests; therefore we only doubt in Dryden's case because 'that conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest' (p. 37, l. 6). And this one circumstance, constituting the sole difference between the two cases, is not, as Johnson proceeds to show, sufficient evidence of hypocrisy.

*Rainolds.* Dr. John Reynolds, who lived temp. James I, was at first a zealous Papist, and his brother William as earnest a Protestant; but by mutual disputation, each converted the other. So at least it is stated in Fuller's Church History, book x, p. 47.

1. 28. *Chillingworth.* William Chillingworth, who afterwards became Chancellor of Salisbury, was a divine who spent a large part of his life in controversy, of which he was very fond. Lord Clarendon in his account of him says:—'He had spent all his younger time in disputation; and had arrived to so great a mastery, as he was inferior to no man in those skirmishes; but he had with his notable perfection in this exercise, contracted such an irresolution, and habit of doubting, that by degrees he grew confident of nothing, and a sceptic at least in the greatest mysteries of faith.' He was converted to Roman Catholicism by a Jesuit, John Fisher, and went to Douay, where he intended to publish a defence of his change, but was prevented by Laud, who converted him back again. He returned to England and published a reply to Edward Knott, a Jesuit, who was then engaged in a controversy with Dr. Potter, Provost of Queen's College, Oxford. This was his great work called 'The Religion of the Protestants a safe Way to Salvation.' This was published in 1638, and two editions were printed in less than five months. The tenth edition appeared in 1742. Chillingworth espoused the Royal cause in the Civil War, and was taken prisoner at Arundel Castle and sent to Chichester, where he died in 1644.

1. 30. *argument.* Johnson seems to have used this word in a peculiar sense. He means men accustomed to, and capable of, clear and accurate reasoning.

P. 37, l. 21. *wise . . . honest.* Here we have again Johnson on virtue and wisdom. Cp. p. 27, l. 3, and note.

1. 30. *They engaged, &c.* This statement is not accurate. A paper had been written by Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, who had avowed

herself a Papist before her death. With this were published two papers found in the strong box of the late king, which it was pretended had been written by him, but which Burnet (*History of his Own Time*, ii. 292) declares could not have been written by the king, 'For he never read the Scriptures nor laid things together further than to turn them to jest.' They are, however, now generally admitted to be the genuine work of the king: see Evelyn's Diary, October 2, 1685, and Pepys's statement there. These papers Stillingfleet attacked, and Dryden undertook the defence of that by the Duchess of York, the defence of the others being by quite a different hand. See Dryden's Introduction to the *Hind and the Panther*, where he says, 'I refer myself to the judgment of those who have read the "Answer to the Defence of the late King's Papers," and that of the Duchess (in which *last* I was concerned) how charitably I have been represented there.'

1. 32. *Stillingfleet*. Edward, Bishop of Worcester, Locke's great opponent. Born 1635, died 1699.

1. 34. *Maimbourg*. This translation was written while Charles II was alive and before Dryden's conversion.

P. 38, 1. 7. *The version . . . saint*. This sentence is confused to an extent rare in Johnson. 'It' refers to the version, 'him' to Xavier; but the pronouns as they stand are quite in a tangle.

1. 13. *an 'Answer.'* Not by Dryden; nor did Burnet think so: the answer was by Varillas himself. If Johnson had quoted a little farther back he would have seen this. 'It will perhaps be a little longer a digesting to M. Varillas than it was a preparing to me. One proof will quickly appear whether the world is so satisfied with *his* answer as upon that to return to any thoughts of his history; for I have been informed,' &c.

P. 39, 1. 17. *To reason . . . truth*. Cf. p. 70, 1. 25.

1. 28. *Montague*. Charles, born 1661, educated at Westminster and Trinity College Cambridge. First noticed for his ode on the death of Charles II, he came to London and joined Prior in 'The City Mouse and the Country Mouse,' on which the Earl of Dorset became his patron and brought him into public life. He was one of those who invited over William III, by whom he was raised to be commissioner of the Treasury, which gave him a seat in the Privy Council. Here he so distinguished himself in finance that on the formation of the Junto Ministry he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. His administration of that office is memorable for the establishment of the Bank of England and the reform of the debased coinage. He was one of the Lords Justices of England to whom the administration of affairs was entrusted during William's absence in 1698 and 1699. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Halifax in 1700.

*Prior*. Matthew, born 1664; was left an orphan, and sent to Cambridge by the Earl of Dorset, who noticed his talents while he was yet almost a boy. He became by the same influence Secretary to the Plenipoten-

tiaries at the Congress of the Hague. A similar office he again held at the Peace of Ryswick, being appointed Secretary to the Commissioners for that treaty, before which however he had aimed some sharp satire at Boileau. He was again employed in a similar capacity for the Treaty of Utrecht, 1713.

P. 40, l. 6. *two first* should be 'first two.' Johnson has a habit of wrongly arranging phrases of this sort. Cf. *Life of Pope*, p. 126, l. 23.

l. 10. *literature*. Cf. note on p. 33, l. 30.

l. 12. *fellow* has often a contemptuous meaning. 'I have great comfort from this fellow; methinks he hath no drowning mark about him, his complexion is perfect gallows.' *Shakspeare, Tempest*, i. 1.

l. 20. *little Bayes*. Cf. p. 48, l. 34, where Johnson says nothing is known of Dryden's person. Cf. *Introduction*, pp. ix. and xxix.

l. 26. *decayed cit.* Cf. p. 15, l. 8, and note.

P. 41, l. 13. *You began* . . . This refers to the *Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell*. The taunt about the religion is a contradiction of what was said in the first edition that 'I do not remember that he is ever considered a deserter from another religion.' Cf. note on p. 3, l. 21. Johnson did not, probably, notice the contradiction at first, and hence corrected the passage in the later edition.

l. 30. Shadwell and Settle had appeared as Og and Doeg in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*.

P. 42, l. 1. *Mac Flecknoe*. This is quite a mistake about Mac Flecknoe. This poem was published in 1682, and was the result of the attacks made on Dryden by Shadwell in the 'Medal of John Bayes'; cf. note p. 35, l. 15. Mac Flecknoe by its name alluded to Richard Flecknoe, then dead four years. He had been author of many works, and him Dryden declares to have been

'Through all the realms of nonsense absolute';  
and he goes on to say how when Flecknoe died he left Shadwell his successor

'With double portion of his father's art.'

*Dunciad*. Cf. *Life of Pope*, p. 169 sq.

l. 13. *if he suffered nothing*. Johnson is here a little hard on Dryden. His loss was more than £100 a year. Lord Dorset would give him the same as the king's pension of £100 as Laureate and £100 as Historiographer, but Dryden had had £300 and a place in the customs, all of which he lost.

l. 25. *a second revolution*. If Dryden expected this he shared the hope with many others; a hope which had not died even in Johnson's own time, when men had not yet left off drinking to 'The King (over the water)'. That Johnson wrote in times not yet perfectly tranquil may account for his visible care to touch as lightly as possible on a question still somewhat delicate. The student will find much interesting matter on these points in 'London in the Jacobite Times,' by Dr. Doran.

P. 43, l. 17. *Rinaldo*. For Rinaldo see Tasso, *La Gerusalemme*, canto 18, st. 17. For Boileau's criticism see *L'Art poétique*, chant 3, l. 213.

l. 27. *improved our numbers*. Johnson here alludes to the improvement introduced by Dryden in the metrical form of English verse, by substituting regularity both of rhythm and rhyme for the extreme looseness of the poets who preceded him. Cf. p. 98, l. 22 sq.

l. 34. *nor had the nation yet learnt . . .* The 'yet' in this sentence is probably a delicate allusion to Johnson's own pension.

P. 44, l. 1. *Blackmore*. Blackmore published in 1695 'Prince Arthur,' an epic poem in ten books. He attacked the witty but coarse writers of the time, and his aim was to 'restore the Muses to their sweet and chaste mansions.' This good intention seems to have been the only merit the performance could claim. The wits whom he attacked were not slow to reply. Pope has referred to him many times; cf. *Essay on Criticism*, v. 463, where, alluding to Dryden, he says—

'Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,  
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise.'

l. 11. *them*. The sentence appears unusual in its construction to us now. The more modern form would be 'Such as it cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce.' Johnson evidently admires this kind of work, but it may well be doubted whether it is ever of the best quality.

P. 45, l. 2. *what hands*. This alludes to Pope's translation. But Pope himself thought otherwise, and said that if Dryden had finished his Homer, he (Pope) would no more have done it than he did Virgil. (Preface to the *Iliad*.) The translation of Homer by Dryden was not a success: it was said that Homer had made his gods into men, but that Dryden turned them into blackguards.

l. 5. 1701. This date should be 1700. Cf. p. 128 and note.

l. 8. *wild story*. This story is indeed wild. It has been fully exposed by Malone, and it is enough to say here that there is not a word of truth in it, and that it was only written by a poor authoress in the Fleet Prison to try to earn a trifle towards her release. Let those answer for the falsehood who had the heart to keep her there.

P. 48, l. 14. *thanks*. These thanks were prefixed to the edition of Dryden's *Dramatic Works* in six volumes, 1717.

l. 21. *Henry*. He was called Erasmus Henry, and held an appointment in the Pope's guards. He is called 'Harry' in his father's letters. In May, 1710, he succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his cousin, Sir John Dryden, and died on December 4 of the same year.

l. 34. Cf. note to p. 40, l. 20, and Introduction, pp. ix. and xxix.

P. 49, l. 8. *access*. A word not fully naturalized in this sense.

l. 14. *discountenanced*, put to shame, put 'out of countenance.' So in *Paradise Lost*, viii. 552:

'Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows.'

P. 50, l. 13. *reverence.* We have here a good instance of the corruption of the text of this life. *Reverence* is the reading of the first edition; Cunningham reads *reference* meaninglessly; and another later text has *deference*.

P. 51, l. 4. *one of his censurers.* Tom Brown, in his 'Reasons for Mr. Bayes changing his religion.'

1. 8. *There are, &c.* Cf. Bacon's Essay 'Of Studies.' 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man: and therefore if a man write little he had need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have a present wit; and if he read little he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not.'

1. 19. *locked up from his own use.* Johnson here means to express in another form what Dryden says of himself:

'Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay,  
To writing bred, I knew not what to say.'

(Satire to his Muse.)

But though this is clearly the meaning Johnson intends to convey, it is not so clear what is the precise grammatical construction of the words. The sentence may be understood to convey that the intellectual treasures were locked up *away from* his own use, out of his own reach, so that he could not readily get at them for the purposes of conversation. The next sentence then presents a contrast to this, mentioning the extreme facility with which he *wrote*. There is, however, another construction possible, which would express the same meaning in a somewhat different form. *Use* may here mean *habit* or *custom*; and we may construe the sentence, 'The treasures of his intellect were great, but, from his habit (of mind and life, in writing so much), locked up.' The next sentence would then be corroborative of this, as tending to show how completely Dryden had accustomed himself to express his thoughts only in writing. Though the actual meaning of the whole passage cannot be in doubt, either construction seems somewhat strained, and the student must decide between them for himself. However it be construed, the sentence must remain one of those rare cases where the carelessness which Johnson often displays about his *matter* has crept into his *style*.

1. 26. *related by Carte.* 'Life of James, Duke of Ormond,' vol. ii. p. 554, folio ed.

P. 52, l. 21. *by living, &c.* Cf. p. 54, l. 12.

1. 28. *Afra Behn.* Aphra or Aphara Behn was born 1642, married a Dutch merchant in London, and becoming a widow went to Antwerp in 1666 as a political spy. She was authoress of many plays, which share in the characteristics of the later Stuart drama. The address alluded to is found prefixed to the play of the 'Feigned Courtezans,' 1679. It is much more pleasant, however, to remember her as authoress of 'Oroonoko,' a novel which, founded on the history of a slave who suffered death by torture for his love of liberty, made one of the first and

one of the best appeals to Englishmen against slavery. This book is written purely both in style and matter. Aphra Behn died in 1689, and ten years later her novel was adapted for the stage by Southerne, and made the best of his plays.

P. 54, l. 4. *Collier.* Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) published in 1698 'A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage: together with the sense of antiquity upon the argument.'

l. 23. *charges him, &c.* Preface to the *Fables*. Malone's 'Prose Works of Dryden,' iii. 647. But Malone doubts whether the libel alluded to is the 'Satire upon Wit,' the 'Fables' having been issued from the press in 1699-1700, early in the year, and the 'Satire upon Wit' bearing the same date. If not, it must have been in the preface to 'Prince Arthur,' where Dryden is alluded to in severe terms.

P. 55, l. 5. *allay.* Old form for *alloy*. Cf. p. 90, l. 16, and Rasselias, p. 321, l. 5.

l. 10. *But what remains.* There seems to be some error here. The 'softer part' is not to be found in the first edition of the *Satire* (1700). The same error is repeated in Johnson's life of Blackmore.

l. 19. *He pretends, &c.* From the preface to the *Fables*. The word *pretend* is here used in its old sense, 'to hold out with a threatening purpose,' a sense in which the verb is very rare, though the noun is more common. Thus:—

‘Against the undivulged *pretence* I fight  
Of treasonous malice.’ Macbeth, ii. 3.

It would be perhaps hard to find another instance of this same verb used actively but in a metaphorical sense. We have it in Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, vi. 2. 19—

‘His target always over her *pretended*’;  
but the meaning is there *actual*, not metaphorical.

P. 56, l. 3. *as if any reproach, &c.* The notion that religion can be religion apart from the doctrines taught, and as such can be respectable, would have found no acceptance with Johnson even if he had not lived in an age when such an idea had hardly been heard of.

l. 5. *Langbaine and Brown.* Langbaine, ed. 1691, p. 171; and Tom Brown, Preface to the second Dialogue:—‘But you, I find, still continue your old humour, which we are to date from the year of Hegira, the loss of Eton, or since orders were refused you.’

l. 11. *Malevolence, &c.* The profoundly religious sentiments of many anti-clerical sects of the Commonwealth are here forgotten.

P. 58, l. 5. £268 15s. 250 guineas at £1 1s. 6d. See below, line 26.  
l. 26. *dependence.*

‘Not for to hide it in a hedge,  
Not for a train attendant,  
But for the glorious privilege  
Of being independent.’ Burns.

l. 29. *general conduct of traders.* On this cf. Introduction, p. xiii. Malone, in his *Life of Dryden*, p. 457, gives a curiously illustrative letter from Tonson, complaining that he had not enough for his money. 'So that,' he says, 'if I have no more I pay ten guineas above forty, and have seventy-two lines less for fifty, in proportion, than the other book-sellers should have had for forty.' Men who estimated poetry thus by bulk could hardly be other than the rugged race Johnson supposed them.

l. 32. *ruggedness.* Johnson here seems to speak feelingly. He had felt something of the 'ruggedness of that race' himself. Cf. Introduction, p. xiii.

P. 59, l. 25. Cf. *Life of Pope*, p. 127, l. 34.

l. 26. *one.* Colley Cibber.

l. 29. *the other.* Old Swinney.

*armed.* The proper form. 'Arm-chair' is a vulgarism, which, however, has established itself.

P. 60, l. 3. *astrology.* Astrology was divided into natural and judicial; the former predicting the movements of the stars, and the latter their influence on the affairs of men.

l. 11. *trines.* The aspect of planets placed in the three angles of a trigon, in which position they were supposed to be of particularly benign influence. Cf.

‘To the other five  
Their planetary motions and aspects  
In sextile, trine, and square and opposite  
Of noxious efficacy.’ Milton, *Par. Lost*, x. 657.

l. 25. *first taught, &c.* Speaking thus of Dryden's criticism Johnson means his works on critical subjects. His answers to attacks on himself or his attacks on others are not much above the age in which they were written.

l. 32. *Webb and Puttenham.* William Webbe printed his 'Discourse of English Poetrie' in 1586. George Puttenham published in 1589 his 'Art of English Poesie.' This was divided into three books, 'the first of Poets and Poesye, the second of Proportion, and the third of Ornamente.' It is a systematic treatise on the origin and nature of poetry; and contains a curious account of the fashion, then coming in from Italy, of writing short poems in various shapes, such as the lozenge, the triangle, the oval, &c.

P. 61, l. 1. *Essay on Dramatic Poetry.* Published in 1667. When Johnson calls it the 'first regular treatise' he must be understood to mean the first in English, for there were numerous treatises in Latin.

l. 3. *He who . . . another.* Johnson here gives an admirable statement of the true value of a classic author, and of the real reason which makes classic works valuable. The *results* of thought become antiquated as they are absorbed in thought larger or more correct. The *process* of thought

is immortal. Hence to know *what* a man thought may be of little value, but it is ever of the highest value to watch *how* he comes to think it.

l. 19. *To judge, &c.* Cf. Introduction, p. xxiii.

l. 22. *is . . . was.* Note the force of the tenses in making the sentence clear.

P. 62, l. 5. *Longinus.* A Greek by birth, born about A.D. 213. He travelled to the East and was made professor of Greek to Queen Zenobia, of Palmyra. He persuaded her to revolt against Rome, and when her city was taken by the Emperor Aurelian, Longinus was put to death, declaring in his last words, 'This world is but a prison, and happy is he who gets out of it soonest.' Of many works only one, attributed to him on somewhat doubtful authority, has been preserved, the treatise *περὶ ὕψους* (De Sublimitate), an enquiry into the causes and styles of sublimity in speaking and writing. Of him Pope says:—

Thee, bold Longinus, all the nine inspire,  
And bless their critic with a poet's fire:  
An ardent judge, who, zealous in his trust,  
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;  
Whose own example strengthens all his laws,  
And is himself the great Sublime he draws.

Essay on Criticism, 675.

l. 20. *proves his right.* We here meet with the question whether a critic should of right be a performer; a question which opens into another allied to it—whether the greatest performer is necessarily the greatest critic.

l. 25. *malim, &c.* This dispute between two mathematicians is not the real original of the saying. Cf. 'Errare mehercule malo cum Platone,' Cic. Tusc. Quaes. i. 17. It has been often imitated:—

'Better to err with Pope than shine with Pye.'

Byron.

P. 63, l. 11. *To write, &c.* Nor was it part of Johnson's character. Cf. Introduction, p. xviii.

P. 64, l. 16. *Sewel.* Ovid's Metamorphoses, Pref.

l. 24. *straw.* Allusion to the straw for bedding in the lunatic asylums of that period. One of the most striking creations of the pencil of Hogarth is his scene in the interior of a lunatic asylum, where in the background is seen one poor creature chained, crouching on his bed of straw.

l. 27. *Gorbuduc.* 'For many years before Shakspeare's plays was the tragedy of Queen Gorbuduc in English verse, written by that famous lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, and progenitor of that excellent person who (as he inherits his soul and title) I wish may inherit his good fortune.' Dedication to the 'Rival Ladies.' Gorbuduc, first produced in 1561 and first printed in 1565, when Shakspeare was one year old, was written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville

together, and was the first English tragedy. It was written in blank verse, and Gorboduc is a king and not a queen. Oldham makes the same mistake in his Horace, 'When men were ravished with Queen Gorboduc.' See Twelfth Night, iv. 2: 'For as the old hermit of Prague, that never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, "That, that is, is."'

1. 29. *Chapman*. 'Besides this they write in Alexandrines, or verses of six feet, such as amongst us is the old translation of Homer by Chapman.' Account of the *Annus Mirabilis*. Chapman's translation is in lines of fourteen syllables.

*discovers* = reveals. Cf.

'Some high-climbing hill  
Which to his eye *discovers* unaware  
The goodly prospect of some foreign land.'

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 546.

1. 30. *Iliad*. There appears to be nothing in the preface to the *Fables* to justify this remark.

P. 65, l. 17. *quoted by Quintilian*. This is confused. The 'Medea' is twice referred to by Quintilian as the work of Ovid, Inst. Or. 8. 5. 6 and 10. 1. 98, also by the author of the *Dict. de Orat.* 12; and 'is not there to be found' seems to mean in Seneca's 'Medea.' The passage in which Quintilian quotes the Medea of Seneca is Inst. Or. 9. 2. 8.

1. 28. *provide* takes 'of' or 'with.' 'To make experiments of cold be *provided of* a conservatory of snow, a good large vault under ground, and a deep well.' Bacon, *Natural and Experimental History*.

P. 66, l. 26. *habitude* = frequent intercourse. Dryden says in another place, 'To write well one must have frequent *habitudes* with the best company.'

1. 32. *Of all this . . . attention*. This is true of all questions of internal evidence.

P. 67, l. 13. *Spriteliness*. Cf. note on p. 27, l. 9.

1. 23. *His style . . . resemblance*. Johnson might have added that such beauties can only be altered to be spoiled; from which it necessarily follows that for the student of English to spend time and labour on making 'paraphrases' of good authors is simply to devote much energy to the acquiring of vices of style. 'In what other words could we convey the ideas and the force of the ideas presented in Shakspeare's phrases—"Life's fitful fever," "To lie in cold obstruction and to rot," "Flatter the mountain tops with sovran eye," or in Romeo's words to Juliet's corpse,—

"Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And Death's pale flag is not advanced there."

A *perfect* style can be altered only for the worse: and no one can have reached right appreciation of the best in style until he has become fully

convinced of this its quality of essential untranslateableness.' Meiklejohn on 'Teaching English.'

P. 69, l. 9. *savageness*. See Pope, Clar. Press Series, Essay on Man, Introduction, p. 21, where it is remarked that the tendency to relapse into savageness is now again coming upon us. The expression in the text is altogether too strong. Cf. Milton's opinion, *L'Allegro*, 133—

‘And sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy’s child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild.’

l. 23. *volubility* = fluency, smoothness.

P. 70, l. 4. *paraphrase*, a very loose rendering; *metaphrase*, an exact rendering. Cf. p. 34, l. 11, note.

l. 25. *but reason*, &c. Cf. p. 39, l. 18.

P. 71, l. 1. *Poverty*, &c. Cf. ‘Small certainties are the bane of men of parts.’ Boswell’s Life.

l. 8. *Sebastian*. Don Sebastian, Act iv. Sc. 3.

l. 14. *occasional*. Written for some especial occasion.

l. 28. *We have been all*, &c. The intense *commonplaceness* of those events which are of such all-absorbing interest to the individual, is an idea ever present to many of the great minds of our literary history. In Shakspeare it occurs almost *passim*, though perhaps its most forcible expression is in *Macbeth* :—

‘To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.’

P. 72, l. 10. *attended* = awaited. Cf. Shakspeare, *Twelfth Night*, iii. 4: ‘Thy interpreter, full of despite, bloody as the hunter, attends thee at the orchard end.’ This use of the word is now obsolete.

l. 27. *Gondibert*. Cf. p. 8, l. 5, note.

P. 73, l. 1. *He*, &c. From the *Astræa Redux*, 51 sq.

l. 6. *Well might*, &c. *Astræa Redux*, 92. Cf. Servius on Virgil, *AEn.* v. 721, ‘*Nox dicitur εὐφρόνη* quia subtilius homo sapiat quam interdiu.’

l. 33. *strook*, pf. of strike.

P. 74, l. 4. *Alga* = seaweed. *Astræa Redux*, 119.

l. 6. *Portunus*, protector of harbours.

l. 9. *Prayer*, &c. *Astræa Redux*, 143.

l. 15. *For by example*, &c. *Astræa Redux*, 207.

l. 20. *The winds*, &c. *Astræa Redux*, 242.

P. 75, l. 8. *not another*. There are others to be found, though all in his earlier works. Cf. p. 4, l. 10:

‘No comet need foretell his change drew on,  
Whose corpse might seem a constellation.’

This pronunciation of the termination *-tion* as a dissyllable is the custom of the 16th century, and in the cases quoted it has been retained in the 17th and 18th. In the writings of Milton it is not uncommon; thus—

‘Guiding the fiery wheeled Throne

The Cherub Contemplation.’ Il Pensero, l. 52.

See also on this point G. P. Marsh, ‘Lectures on the English Language,’ First Series, p. 530, where a full account of the pronunciation is given and reference made to authorities which prove that the reckoning *-tion* as two syllables is not a mere poetic licence but the recognised custom of the time. Thus Puttenham, ‘Arte of English Poesie’ (p. 128 of Arber’s reprint), says: ‘And therefore in all such long polisillables ye doe only giue two sharpe accents, and thereby reduce him into two feete, as in this word [rēmūnērātiōn] which makes a couple of good Dactils, and in this word [cōntribūtiōn] which makes a good Spondeus and a good Dactil, and in this word [recāpitūlātiōn] which makes two dactills and a sillable overplus to annexe to the word precedent to helpe peece vp another foote.’ So also Sir Philip Sidney, ‘An Apologie for Poetrie’ (p. 71 of Arber’s reprint):—‘Lastly euen the very ryme it selfe the Italian cannot put in the last sillable, by the French named the Masculine ryme, but still in the next to the last, which the French call the Female; or the next before that, which the Italians term Sdrucciola. The example of the former is *Buono, Suono*; of the Sdrucciola *Femina, Semina*. The French, of the other side, hath both the Male, as *Bon, Son*, and the Female as *Plaise, Taise*. But the Sdrucciola hee hath not; where the English hath all three; as *Due, True; Father, Rather; Motion, Potion*.’

But the most unequivocal account of these words is contained in Ben Jonson’s English Grammar. We there read (p. 55, ed. 1640) under the heading ‘Of Accent,’ that ‘Nouns ending in *-tion* or *-sion* are accented on the antepenultimā: as *condiōn*, *infūsion*, &c.’

The expression ‘that old versification’ used by Johnson would seem to imply that he looked upon this custom as a mere poetical licence. If so the testimony of the authorities just quoted must have escaped his attention.

l. 30. *Chancellor of the Indies*. Cunningham reads *to*, but without authority.

P. 76, l. 12. *rowl*, older form of ‘roll.’

l. 32. *the meaning*. The student will hardly be desirous to undertake the task here declined by Johnson.

l. 37. *it shall* refers to ‘age.’

P. 77, l. 15. *the first*. Johnson did not know his Ronsard (1524-1585). Cf. *Œuvres*, tome 6, p. 40 (ed. 1876):

'Ils ont cherché

Le soufre que nature aux yeux avoit caché.' &c.

l. 19. *Milton . . . angels.* The *Annus Mirabilis* appeared in 1667, and *Paradise Lost* in the same year, but probably later in the year. The dedication of the *Annus Mirabilis* is dated in Nov. 1666, which would make us suppose that the poem would appear early in 1667. The date of Milton's agreement for the sale of the copyright of *Paradise Lost* is April 27, 1667, and the book would hardly therefore appear till quite late in the year.

l. 29. *resemblance.* To estimate the truth of this, compare Dryden's 'initial stanzas' with the following from Waller:—

'Now for some ages had the pride of Spain  
Made the sun shine on half the world in vain,  
While she bid war on all that durst supply  
The place of those her cruelty made die.  
Of Nature's bounty men forebore to taste,  
And the best portion of the world lay waste.  
From the New World her silver and her gold  
Came like a tempest to confound the old.  
Feeding with these the bribed Elector's hopes,  
Alone she gives us emperors and popes;  
With these accomplishing her vast designs,  
Europe was shaken with her Indian mines.'

Of a War with Spain and a Fight at Sea.

P. 78, l. 20. *castor* = beaver.

l. 35. *both hazard, &c.* Dryden is probably here influenced by the Judgment of Solomon.

l. 38. *preiously* = costlily.

P. 79, l. 3. *Our foes.* The construction is, 'We left our foes vanquished by our valour.'

P. 80, l. 22. *sear-cloth*, verb transitive, to cover with waxed cloth.

l. 34. *commerce*, accented on the last syllable.

'To join in marriage and commerce,  
And only 'mong themselves converse.'

Butler, *Hudibras*, ii. 2. 1385.

Cf. also

'Looks commerçing with the skies.'

Milton, *Il Penseroso*, l. 39.

P. 81, l. 7. *A mind better, &c.* The same defect seems to have been the cause of Johnson's failure in *Irene*. Cf. the remarks made by Garrick on this head in *Boswell, Life, 1749*.

l. 24. *Virgil's line.* In the Clarendon Press Series edition of Dryden's poems there is a slight mistake here in speaking as if Johnson thought that this line was Seneca's own. See the note on the *Annus Mirabilis*, 216.

l. 32. *feeble voice.* The weak voice of ghosts is a notion as old as Homer. Cf. Iliad, xxiii. 99:

Ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας ὥρεξατο χερσὸν φίλησιν,  
οὐδὲ ἔλαβε· ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἡύτε καπνὸς  
ψχετο τετριγνία.

Cf. also Virgil, AEn. vi. 492:

‘Pars tollere vocem  
Exiguam; inceptus clamor frustratur hiantes.’

So also in Shakspeare the same idea of *inarticulateness* is found more than once:

‘And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.’

Julius Cæsar, ii. 2.

The idea has taken deep root in the minds of men, and shows itself in many forms in literature and in sayings. We have such phrases as ‘The silent tomb.’

P. 83, l. 13. *Charles . . . David.* In the ‘Absalom and Achitophel’ by David is meant Charles II.

l. 20. *weary of admiration.* Cf. Tennyson, Enoch Arden:

‘No want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts and nourishing roots;  
Nor, save for pity, was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thatched with leaves of palm, a hut,  
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three  
*Set in this Eden of all plenieousness*  
*Dwelt with eternal summer ill content.*’

P. 84, l. 1. *written by Tate.* Cf. p. 36, l. 7, where this second part is attributed to Dryden. The fact is that Dryden wrote but a very small part of it, though he may have revised it all. Dryden wrote about two hundred lines, and this is the insertion alluded to by Johnson.

l. 10. *a single incident.* Cf. p. 35, l. 20, and p. 34, l. 17, note.

P. 85, l. 20. *giants' war.* Cf. Horace, Odes, ii. 19. 21, and iii. 4. 49.

l. 29. *the noblest ode.* Johnson’s prejudice against Milton is here visible. At least one of Milton’s odes (that on the Nativity) is superior to anything Dryden ever wrote. Hallam will only say of the Ode on the Nativity, ‘*perhaps* the finest in the English language,’ but Hallam may speak here with studied caution. Cf. p. 99, ll. 7 and 8, and note.

P. 86, l. 19. *The conclusion . . . place.* Religion was a great reality to Johnson. But he knew nothing of music: in fact, it may well be doubted whether among Pope’s most enthusiastic admirers could be found a skilled musician. Johnson allows that to understand music he must have another sense given him (Boswell, Life, 1775), and thus to him a metaphor drawn from music wanted in solemnity. He had not felt the force of ‘those mighty strains in which Haydn ushers in the

light of the first day, and Spohr draws down the shadows of the last'; if he had, he would not have complained of the stanzas he quotes. They compare very favourably with the pitiful personality of Campbell's 'Last Man,' defying 'a darkening universe':

'The darkening universe defy,  
To quench his immortality,  
Or shake his trust in God.'

P. 87, l. 39. *Religio Medici*. Dr. Thomas Browne of Norwich published *Religio Medici* in 1643. There were two spurious editions in the preceding year.

P. 88, l. 32. *This absurdity*. Cf. p. 39, l. 25.

P. 89, l. 5. *bribed by the subject*. Pope was a Roman Catholic.

P. 90, l. 16. *allay*. Cf. p. 55, l. 5, and note.

l. 17. *Shards or sherd*s—fragments. This word commonly occurs in the compound form *pot-sherd*. It properly means 'a broken thing,' A.S. *sceared*, broken. Cf. the note given on this passage in the Dryden, Clar. Press Series, p. 274.

P. 91, l. 25. *poetical, &c.* From this passage may easily be seen what side Johnson would have taken in the still open question whether poetical ratiocination is or is not a contradiction in terms.

P. 92, l. 15. *It is therefore, &c.* This sentence, though exceedingly clumsy, is construed exactly as it stands: 'Even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated; but from this must be excepted some passages which will never be excelled.'

P. 93, l. 5. *eloquence*. Cf. p. 8, l. 3, and note.

P. 97, l. 3. Dr. Brady's translation was published in four volumes, 8vo, 1716-26.

l. 29. *the reader . . . commend*. Cf. 'weary of admiration,' p. 83, l. 20, and note.

P. 98, l. 29. *one of the Beroalds*. The Beroalds, uncle and nephew, were two of the distinguished scholars of the sixteenth century. Filippo Beroaldo, the elder (1453-1505), was born at Bologna, displayed extraordinary abilities in his youth, and opened a school at the age of nineteen. He lectured for some months in Paris, and on his return to Bologna was made professor of *belles lettres* there. He it is to whom Johnson refers.

l. 30. *still*=always.

P. 99, l. 7. *If indeed*. There is here again the same ignoring of the claims of Milton. Cf. p. 85, l. 29, and note.

l. 10. *superior*. He had already called the Ode on Killigrew the 'noblest ode in our language.' Cf. p. 85, l. 29.

l. 17. *His last . . . divided*:

'Orpheus could lead the savage race,  
And trees unrooted left their place,  
Squacious of the lyre;  
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:

When to her organ vocal breath was given,  
 An angel heard and straight appeared  
 Mistaking earth for heaven.'

Ode for Cecilia's Day, 7.

P. 100, l. 25. *Otway*. Born 1657. He commenced life as an actor, and failed in Mrs. Behn's 'Jealous Bridegroom.' He then went to Flanders, and on his return he produced 'Alcibiades' and 'Don Carlos,' which last was a great success. His play of 'The Orphan' is remarkable as having been the first tragedy of domestic life in the English language,—the first wherein ordinary people are substituted for the usual tragical machinery of kings and queens. His 'Venice Preserved' is still sometimes acted, and it is of this play that Dryden speaks in the words quoted. 'I will not defend everything in his "Venice Preserved," but I must bear this testimony to his memory, that the passions are truly touched in it, though perhaps there is somewhat to be desired both in the grounds of them, and in the height and elegance of expression; but Nature is there, which is the *greatest* beauty.' Parallel of Poetry and Painting, 1695. There is no authority for the statement that Dryden thought with contempt of Otway. Note also how Johnson again quotes from memory, inaccurately (*chief* for *greatest*), rather than seek out the passage.

P. 101, l. 13. *verba* . . . :

'Rem tibi Socratae poterunt ostendere chartae  
 Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.'

Horace, Ars Poet. 310.

l. 23. *plagiary*. 'A thief in literature, one who steals the thoughts or writings of another.' Johnson's Dictionary. 'Without invention a painter is but a copier, and a poet but a *plagiary* of others.' Dryden's Dufresnoy.

l. 32. *Move swiftly*, &c. Cf. p. 21, l. 1.

P. 103, l. 25. *but I knew . . .* Cf. p. 16, l. 13.

P. 104, l. 2. *spooming*. *Spoom*, to sail before the wind.

'When Virtue spoons before a prosperous gale,  
 My heaving wishes help to fill the sail.'

l. 27. *fratcheur* is in the poem on the Coronation, l. 102. *Fouge*, which Dryden wrote for *fougue*, is in Astraea Redux, 203. From this fault of pedantic innovations Johnson was not himself free. Much here said might have been applied to Johnson himself. Cf. Introduction, p. xxvii.

P. 106, l. 10. *Phaer*. Johnson quotes below the first two lines as an example of the fourteen-syllable metre. The last three will serve as an example of the triplet:—

'So lord Aeneas to them all, ententise to behold  
 The destinies of the gods did show and all his courses told, }  
 He staid at last, and making here an end did silence hold.'

There are fifteen of these triplets in the third book. And throughout the whole translation their occurrence is common. So also Joseph Hall, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, in his *Satires*, Bk. iv. Sat. 1:—

‘Titius knew not where to shroude his head  
Until he did a dying widow wed,  
Whiles she lay doating on her death’s bed.’

1. 15. *When Asia’s, &c.* This is the same metre as Macaulay’s *Virginia.*

1. 25. *Polyolbion.* Appeared 1613. *Polyolbion* = ‘many ways happy.’

1. 29. *Cowley was the first, &c.* This is an error. Many writers of the Elizabethan era inserted Alexandrines amongst their heroics. Hall, who has already been quoted for the triplet, will afford an instance:—

‘As though the staring world hanged on his sleeve,  
Whene’er he smiles to laugh, and when he sighs to grieve.’

Satires, Bk. i. Sat. 7.

1. 34. *Swift.* Swift says in a letter (dated April 12, 1735) to Mr. Thomas Beach:—‘Upon which I took the number of lines, which are in all 299, the odd number being occasioned by what they call a triplet, which was a vicious way of rhyming, wherewith Dryden abounded, and was imitated by all the bad versifiers of Charles II’s reign. Dryden, though my near relation, is one I have often blamed as well as pitied. He was poor and in great haste to finish his plays, because by them he chiefly supported his family, and this made him so very incorrect; he likewise brought in the Alexandrine verse at the end of his triplets. I was so angry at these corruptions that above 24 years ago I banished them all by one triplet, with the Alexandrine, upon a very ridiculous subject.’

P. 107, l. 30. Elijah Fenton, who aided Pope in his translation of the *Odyssey*, translated four books and supplied the notes. He also wrote a tragedy, ‘*Mariamne.*’ He edited Waller and wrote a life of Milton.

P. 108, l. 1. *second* is the emphatic word in this sentence, contrasted with ‘*first*’ in line 5.

1. 24. *Davis*, who became Sir John Davies after the reign of Elizabeth, author of ‘*Nosce Teipsum*,’ a poem in stanzas of elegiac verse. This poem had a considerable influence on English verse, and Davies hardly deserves the covert sneer of Johnson. Cf. p. 8, l. 5, note.

## THE LIFE OF POPE.

P. 125, l. 3. Cf. Pope's Epistle to Arbuthnot, l. 388:—

‘Of gentle blood (part shed in honour's cause

While yet in Britain honour had applause)

Each parent sprung.’

1. 4. *Earl of Downe.* ‘When Mr. Pope published the notes on the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, in giving an account of his family, Mr. Pottering, a relation of his, observed, that his cousin Pope had made himself out a fine pedigree, but he wondered where he got it; that he had never heard anything himself of their being descended from the Earls of Down; and, what is more, he had an old maiden aunt, equally related, a great genealogist, who was always talking of her family, but never mentioned this circumstance; on which she certainly would not have been silent, had she known anything of it.... The Earl of Guildford says that he has seen and examined the pedigrees of that family [the Popes, Earls of Down] and is sure that there were then none of the name of Pope left, who could be descended from that family.’ Warton’s Essay on Pope, vol. ii. p. 256, ed. 1806. Pope’s claim to descent from the Earls of Downe is, however, allowed by Mr. Hunter (Pope, his Descent and Family, 1857) to be not improbable.

1. 5. *His mother.* Even of this there seems to be much doubt. It rests on the authority of ‘Mr. Brooke, one of the Heralds, who is writing an account of Yorkshire families.’ Mason to Walpole, Dec. 4, 1782.

1. 9. *sequestrations.* ‘Left her what estate remained after the sequestrations and forfeitures of her family.’ Pope’s Note on the Epistle to Arbuthnot, l. 381.

1. 11. *told by Pope.* As in the Epistle to Arbuthnot above quoted.

1. 15. *Mrs. Racket.* It appears that this name should properly be Rackett. She was Pope’s half-sister by his mother’s former marriage.

1. 16. *Strand.* Should be Lombard Street.

P. 126, l. 6. *Taverner.* In this name Johnson follows Ruffhead. By Spence the name of the priest is given as Banister.

1. 9. *Ogilby.* John Ogilby (1600-1676) was a native of Edinburgh, and came of a good family, which had been so reduced that young Ogilby had to release his father from a debtors’ prison, and afterwards bind himself apprentice to a dancing-master in London. Picking up scholarship as best he could, he was employed by Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, and accompanied that nobleman to Ireland. There he translated some of ‘Esop’s Fables’ into English verse, and soon after started a theatre in Dublin. The breaking out of the rebellion in Ireland ruined him, and he arrived in London quite destitute, after having been shipwrecked on his voyage home. But he made his way on foot to

Cambridge, where he was encouraged, and there translated the 'Works of Virgil.' He learnt Greek about 1654, and proceeded to translate Homer, the work alluded to in the text. He also published an edition of the English Bible, more elaborate than any of its predecessors. In 1666 his house and property in London were destroyed by the great fire, but his energy was equal to the task of again recovering his fortunes.

We may discover some lingering sympathy with him in Johnson's words 'Ogilby's assistance,' &c. It is well, therefore, to note how his life was one continued struggle against ever-recurring difficulties, as this would explain, by a natural bond of sympathy, the trace of kindness with which Johnson seems to regard one of the worst of poets.

*Sandys.* George Sandys published his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in 1626.

1. 14. *From the . . . .* This sentence is far too long, and open to the censure that it introduces matter too heterogeneous to be comprised within the limits of one sentence. There are no less than eight principal points:—Taverner, Twyford, Hyde Park Corner, the playhouse, Ogilby, the schoolfellows, the gardener, and Ajax.

1. 23. *two last.* Should be *last two*. Johnson inveterately misarranges this phrase and others like it. Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 40, 1. 6, and note.

1. 30. *Tells of himself.* In the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, 1. 128.

1. 33. *Pindar.* One of the greatest lyric poets of Greece. Little is known of his life, his probable date being about B.C. 520-440. He was born in the territory of Thebes, though whether in Thebes itself or at Cynocephala is uncertain. There is a tale that he was first attracted to poetry by a miraculous swarm of bees, which in his infancy settled on his lips, as he lay sleeping. Cf. *Pausanias*, ix. 23. 2: Πίνδαρον δὲ ἡλικιαν ὄντα νεανίσκον καὶ λόντα ἐς Θεσπιὰς ὥρᾳ καύματος περὶ μεσοῦσαν μάλιστα ἡμέραν κόπος καὶ ὑπνος ἀπ' αὐτοῦ κατελάμβανεν. 'Ο μὲν δὴ ὡς εὖχε κατακλίνεται βραχὺ ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁδοῦ μέλισσαι δὲ αὐτῷ καθεύδοντι προσεπέτοντό τε καὶ ἐπλασσον πρὸς τὰ χεῖλη τοῦ κηροῦ ἀρχὴ μὲν Πινδάρῳ ποιεῖν ἄσματα ἐγένετο τοιαύτη.

P. 127, 1. 6. *in a chest.* This story is not true. The money was invested in foreign securities.

1. 13. *Tully's 'Offices.'* Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*. We are not informed how many months Deane read with Pope, nor exactly what proportion of the *Offices* was done. Cicero *De Officiis* is not short, and no easy reading for a boy of twelve, even though as precocious as Pope undoubtedly was.

1. 24. *His primary . . . .* To such early training Pope doubtless owed much of his subsequent facility in the attainment of correctness and elegance. We have another instance of similar training with a similar result in the early instruction in speaking given by his father to the younger Pitt.

l. 33. *coffee-house*. Cf. Life of Dryden, p. 59, l. 25.

P. 128, l. 1. 1701. Should be 1700.

l. 5. *foreseen the greatness*. Dryden may have done so to a certain extent. 'I was informed by an intimate friend of Pope [Walter Harte] that when he was yet a mere boy, Dryden gave him a shilling, by way of encouragement, for a translation he had made of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe from Ovid.' Warton, *Essay on Pope*, vol. i. p. 80, note; ed. 1806.

l. 9. *Cowley*. 'Among the English poets, Cowley, Milton, and Pope might be said "to lisp in numbers"; and have given such early proofs, not only of powers of language, but of comprehension of things, as to more tardy minds seems scarcely credible. But of the learned puerilities of Cowley there is no doubt, since a volume of his poems was not only written but printed in his thirteenth year, containing, with other poetical compositions, "The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe," written when he was ten years old; and "Constantia and Philetus," written two years after.' Johnson's *Life of Cowley*.

The 'thirteenth year' of the above extract is, however, incorrect. Cowley was born in 1618, and this book was printed in 1633, his *fifteenth year*.

l. 13. *Thebais*. The *Thebais* of Publius Papinius Statius was finished at Naples, the native town of its author, and dedicated to the Emperor Domitian. This was between the years A.D. 86 and 90, but there is much difficulty about the precise fixing of these dates. He is alluded to, perhaps satirised, by Juvenal, in the following lines:—

Curritur ad vocem jucundam et carmen amicæ  
Thebaidos, laetam fecit cum Statius urbem,  
Promisitque diem; tanta dulcedine captos  
Afficit ille animos, tantaque libidine vulgi  
Auditur; sed, cum fregit subsellia versu,  
Esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendat Agaven.'

Sat. vii. 82.

l. 14. *if he had no help*. It seems he had the assistance of Walsh. 'In the scattered lessons I used to set myself about that time, I translated above a quarter of the *Metamorphoses* and that part of Statius which was afterwards printed with the corrections of Walsh.' Pope, in Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 210, ed. 1858.

l. 16. *By Dryden's Fables*. Cf. Life of Dryden, p. 98.

l. 27. *'Nothing'*. This is the best of many light pieces by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, one of the court wits of Charles II's reign. Of his dissolute life and penitent death an account was given by Burnet in 1680. Speaking of Rochester to Lord Dorset, Pope says: 'They should be considered as holiday writers; as gentlemen that diverted themselves now and then with poetry, rather than as poets.' Spence's *Anecdotes*, p. 212.

P. 129, l. 18. *St. Geneviève.* St. Geneviève (A.D. 424-512) was the patron saint of Paris. She twice saved the city, according to the traditions, by her prayers; first from Attila and the Huns, and again on another occasion when it was besieged; but of this latter siege there are neither dates nor details. There is a church called after her standing in the Quartier Latin.

l. 28. *Trumbal.* This name is incorrectly spelt by Johnson, who doubtless wrote it from memory. Sir William Trumbull was born at Easthamstead in Berkshire. He was Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, was sent by Charles II on several diplomatic missions, and on his return was made Lord of the Treasury, and afterwards Secretary of State with the Duke of Shrewsbury. He retired to his native place on his resignation, and there died in 1716.

P. 130, l. 20. *his full share.* Swift places him in an honourable position among distinguished men of the time:— Your acquaintance with distinguished men of all kinds was almost as ancient as mine. I mean Wycherley, Rowe, Prior, Congreve, Addison, Parnell, &c. Swift to Pope, Dec. 2, 1736.

l. 24. *Dennis.* This John Dennis was a critic not without some merit, to whom Pope was always hostile. Dennis is the Appius of the *Essay on Criticism*, 585:—

‘But Appius reddens at each word you speak  
And stares, tremendous, with a threat’ning eye,  
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry.’

l. 25. *pleasant*=amusing. The absolute use of the word in this sense seems unusual. Locke (*Essay on the Human Understanding*, ii. 17, 14) speaks of ‘a pleasant argument,’ in the sense of one suited rather to produce mirth than conviction, but in such a phrase as ‘It is pleasant’ we should generally expect the meaning *agreeable*. But Johnson cannot have meant that it is agreeable to see how soon Pope learnt *cant*.

P. 131, l. 3. *always considered him with kindness.* ‘I beg you, sir, to pardon my speaking well of myself in this one thing, since I doubt not but Mr. Wycherley speaks ill enough of me in some others. But I pardon his jealousy, which is become of his nature, and shall never be his enemy whatsoever he says of me.’ Pope to H. Cromwell, Oct. 28, 1710. Johnson’s character of Wycherley is not just. Offence does not seem to have been taken at Pope’s corrections, but at his satirising his friend Wycherley at the very time when he professed so much affection for him. Johnson’s admiration of Pope’s genius made him perhaps a little inclined to side with him in his quarrels more than justice would warrant.

l. 7. *a-hunting.* *A* is here a preposition, meaning *on*. Cf. Life of Dryden, p. 13, l. 32.

l. 13. *Their correspondence . . . Miscellanies.* These letters were first

published by Curril in 1726. The originals are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Pope himself introduced many of them into his edition of 1735, but they were much altered by him.

l. 21. *Walsh advised him.* ‘About fifteen I got acquainted with Mr. Walsh. He used to encourage me much, and used to tell me that there was one way left of excelling: for though we had several great poets, we never had any one great poet that was correct; and he desired me to make that my study and aim.’ Spence’s *Anecdotes*, p. 212.

l. 30. *Will’s.* Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 59, l. 27.

P. 132, l. 10. *He that reads, &c.* Cf. Bacon’s *Essay ‘Of Studies’*. ‘Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.’

P. 133, l. 7. *Nor how his person is depreciated.* In the lines above quoted (p. 130, l. 24, note) we find how the person of Dennis is attacked. Dennis had written a tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*, and his habit of staring was well known, as also a peculiar affection for the word ‘tremendous.’

l. 11. *pamphlet.* Johnson has not previously mentioned that the attack made by Dennis on the *Essay on Criticism* took the form of a pamphlet, called ‘*Reflections Critical and Satirical upon a late Rhapsody called an Essay on Criticism*’.

l. 32. *There are, &c.* This is the reading of all editions prior to that of 1743. The couplet as altered by Pope now stands:—

‘Some to whom Heav’n in wit has been profuse

Want as much more to turn it to its use.’ l. 80.

But Warburton well observes that this has only magnified the fault.

P. 134, l. 15. *Where wanted . . .* This line when altered (see below, l. 20) ran thus:—

‘And still the more we give the more required.’ (503.)

l. 30. *Between Sunninghill and Oakingham.* That is, inquire at Binfield.

l. 31. *squab=fat.*

P. 135, l. 16. *Of this Essay . . . impression.* ‘Thus, sir, you see I do in my *conscience* persist in what I have written; yet in *friendship* I will recant and alter whatever you please in case of a second edition, which I yet think the book will never arrive at, for Tonson’s printer told me he drew off a thousand copies in his first impression, and I fancy a treatise of this nature, which not one gentleman in threescore even of liberal education can understand, will hardly exceed the vent of that number.’ Pope to Caryll, July 19, 1711.

l. 18. *The gentlemen.* Warton, in his *Life of Pope*, p. xviii, narrates that the sale of the *Essay on Criticism* was at first so slow that Pope, to promote it, sent out twenty copies as presents to various persons of repute, after which the book began to be called for.

1. 24. *Erasmus*. The lines in which Pope speaks of Erasmus are:—  
 ‘At length Erasmus, that great injured name,  
 (The glory of the priesthood and the shame,)  
 Stemmed the wild torrent of a barb’rous age,  
 And drove these holy Vandals off the stage.’

Essay on Criticism, 693.

Pope expressed an opinion that the priests had accused him of heterodoxy in other portions of the poem only because they were angry with his defence of Erasmus. ‘What these therefore in their own opinion are really angry at is, that a man whom their tribe oppressed and persecuted, Erasmus by name, should be vindicated after a whole age of obloquy, by one of their own people who is free and bold enough to utter a generous truth in behalf of the dead, whom no man sure will flatter, and few do justice to.’ Pope to Caryll, July 19, 1711.

1. 29. *Dr. Warburton*. ‘Dr. Warburton, endeavouring to demonstrate, what Addison could not discover, nor Pope himself, according to the testimony of his intimate friend, Richardson, ever thought of or intended, that this Essay was written with a methodical and systematic regularity, has accompanied the whole with a long and laboured commentary, in which he has tortured many passages to support this goundless opinion.’ Warton, Edition of Pope’s Works, 1797, vol. i. p. 174.

There is however very little occasion to speculate on the historical accuracy of Warburton’s theory of the *Essay on Criticism*. The remarks of Johnson himself show conclusively, not only that such a systematic method had as a fact no existence, but also that by the nature of the poem itself, it could not have been thus regularly planned. Cf. *infra*, l. 33, sq.

P. 136, l. 14. *Aristotle*. After having proved that virtue and vice are alike voluntary, Aristotle proceeds to describe the virtues one by one (Nic. Ethics, iii. 6): ‘Αναλαβόντες δὴ περὶ ἐκάστης, εἰπωμεν τίνες εἰσὶ καὶ περὶ ποῖα καὶ πῶς ἄμα δ’ ἔσται δῆλον καὶ πόσαι εἰσίν. Καὶ πρῶτον περὶ ἀνδρείας.

1. 23. *Spectator*. No. 378; date, May 14, 1712.

1. 28. *The lady’s name*. Inquiry does not seem to have been fruitful of any certainty even when prosecuted by minds more loving of minute labour than Johnson’s. It seems pretty certain that Pope’s own feelings were intimately concerned, but even this opinion has opponents.

‘After many and wide inquiries I have been informed that her name was Wainsbury, and that (which is a singular circumstance) she was as ill-shaped and deformed as our author. Her death was not by a sword, but, what would less bear to be told poetically, she hanged herself.’ Warton’s edition of Pope, 1797, vol. i. p. 336.

1. Ruffhead, alluded to in the text, simply followed Ayre, and Ayre, being a mere bookmaker who inserted the tale in a work full of blunders,

renders his authority worthless. And the above extract from Warton contradicts every part of the account of the unfortunate lady as given in the poem itself.

So many contradictory accounts point almost irresistibly to the conclusion that she was, so far as the story of her life and death are concerned, entirely a fictitious person, though probably the heroine of the poem had some living original, whose real fate and adventures have no analogy to that of the Unfortunate Lady of the poem.

P. 137, l. 33. *Mrs. Arabella Fermor.* 'Mrs.' was then the title of all ladies grown up, whether married or single.

P. 138, l. 2. *Mr. Caryl.* There is a mistake here. The Caryll who had been secretary to King James's Queen was either the father or the uncle of the Caryll at whose request the poem was written.

l. 13. *with the usual process.* Johnson here allows to be not only true but usual, a process which he declares incredible in the life of Dryden. Cf. p. 25, l. 30 sq.

l. 19. *Whether all this be true.* There can be no doubt that Johnson is right here about the feelings with which the lady's family regarded the poem. Pope himself, in a letter to Caryll (Dec. 15, 1713), proposes to write a dedication to soothe her, and as 'a piece of justice in return to the wrong interpretations she has suffered under on the score of that piece.'

l. 28. *Rosicrucians*, or Rosycrucians, were a sect or secret society in Germany, the history of which is now very obscure. They were supposed to be possessed of various knowledge and powers, natural and supernatural, beyond the reach of common men, such as the philosopher's stone, &c. An endeavour has been made to trace to them the origin of the modern Freemasons, but such a theory is erroneous. This 'Rosicrucian philosophy,' as it was sometimes called, spread widely over Europe, and its adherents became dreaded by governments as a secret society. Pope took his account of it from a little satirical dialogue, published at Paris by De Montfaucon, Abbé de Villars (Works, vol. xii), and entitled *Le Comte de Gabalis*.

l. 32. *too hastily considered.* This view of Addison's conduct was Pope's own, and was both too mean and too improbable to be shared. The chances were all in favour of Addison's advice being accurate. Johnson seldom condemns, in the terms they deserve, the meanness and suspicion of Pope's character. In this case the offence given by Addison was, on Pope's own showing, the first occasion of any doubt as to his friendship, and this doubt was naturally the offspring of his own double-dealing in the matter of his attack upon John Dennis. Cf. p. 141, l. 7, note. Macaulay has warmly defended Addison's advice, in his Essays (1 vol. ed. p. 717), and even though it proved to have been mistaken, it was not more so than Pope's own advice to Addison, not to bring 'Cato' on the stage. (Pope's Works, ed. Elwin, vol. i. p. 327.)

P. 139, l. 28. *Many years afterwards.* In 1728.

l. 33. *Temple of Fame.* This poem did not appear till 1715.

P. 140, l. 7. *The date.* It was first published in the Collected Poems, 4to. 1717.

l. 23. *Where the addition . . . told.* Johnson is mistaken in this. Pope himself says in a note that the addition commenced at line 291.

l. 24. *The Peace.* This is an allusion to the treaty of Utrecht. The peace was not signed till March 30th, 1713, and Windsor Forest was published before March 9th. But the acceptance of the peace had been for some time an accomplished fact, and Pope did not wait for the accompanying formalities.

P. 141, l. 7. *Narrative.* This was called 'Dr. Norris's Narrative of the Frenzy of Mr. John Dennis,' Dr. Norris being celebrated at the time as a doctor for the insane.

The whole of this transaction was discreditable in the extreme to Pope. The real facts are as follows:—

Dennis had attacked the *Essay on Criticism* in reply to the strictures on himself therein contained. Though far from being a match for Pope in ability, he was not altogether destitute of parts, and had a gift, formidable in those days, of almost unlimited scurrility. Johnson allows that Pope showed he felt 'his force or his venom' (p. 135, l. 15). And Pope, thus roughly handled, long meditated revenge, and did not scruple, when Addison's 'Cato' was published, to try and make of his friend a tool to be used against his enemy. He accordingly went to Lintot and persuaded him to engage Dennis to attack the *Cato*, of whose success Pope had become jealous. There was here a triple scheme; to disparage the *Cato*, to provide for Dennis a severe chastisement at the hands of so able a man as Addison, and to give himself an opportunity of an assault on Dennis, without appearing to have any personal feeling in the matter. The 'cant of sensibility' alluded to in the letter quoted below was thus worse than cant; it was falsehood. And its object was to deceive the public, for Pope must have known it could not deceive Addison for long. It is pleasing to think how the whole scheme collapsed. Dennis exposed him in 1728, in his 'Remarks on the Rape of the Lock,' and again in 1729, in his 'Remarks on the Dunciad,' and on neither occasion did Pope venture a reply. Cf. p. 173, l. 3. The truth must have reached the ears of Addison, and was enough to justify any hostility he may have felt for Pope. And Addison, instead of attacking Dennis, disclaimed to him the whole affair.

l. 11. *a letter.* Pope to Addison, July 20, 1713.

l. 12. *would be my own in my own case.* Johnson again quotes loosely from memory; the words are 'Would have been my own had it been my own case.'

l. 20. *Guardian.* No. 40, 27th April, 1713. That Pope's writing this piece would offend Philips was natural, but it is not easy to see how

Addison was guilty of malice in allowing the publication. It was never a safe employment to give advice to Pope, and Addison could hardly be expected to make it his business to prevent Pope giving offence to a third party.

1. 34. *Jervas*. Charles Jervas was an indifferent painter, who died in 1740. He was much flattered by Pope, whose 'Epistle to Jervas' is about the most feeble of his poems.

P. 142, l. 16. *Betterton*. 'I have seen, of Mr. Pope's drawing, a grave old Chaucer, from Occleve; a Betterton; a Lucius Verus, large profile; two Turkish heads; a Janizary from the life; Antinous; and St. John praying.' Spence's *Anecdotes*.

Thomas Betterton (1635-1710) was a great actor, who played all through the time when Dryden was writing for the stage. Cibber speaks of his power of acting in terms of such very high praise as to leave some doubt whether they must not of necessity be exaggerated. That he was a man of uncommon power, and understood the spirit of the highest art in acting, is shown by the tale related of him and Archbishop Tillotson, whose friendship he always retained. The Archbishop complaining that he could not move his hearers in the pulpit as Betterton could on the stage; 'That,' says Betterton, 'I think, is easy to be accounted for: it is because you are only telling them a story, and I am showing them facts.' Spence's *Anecdotes*.

1. 17. *The next year*. Should be 'the same year.' See last page.

1. 30. *The first*. The fourth edition of Milton's 'Paradise Lost' in folio had been published by subscription in 1688, and Walton's Polyglott Bible in 1657.

P. 143, l. 21. *Addison*. 'You gave me leave once to take the liberty of a friend in advising you not to content yourself with one half of the nation for your admirers, when you might command them all. If I might take the freedom to repeat it, I would on this occasion. I think you are very happy that you are out of the fray.' Addison to Pope, 2nd Nov. 1713.

1. 32. *two hundred . . .* 'I had twelve hundred pounds for my translation of the Iliad, and six hundred for the Odyssey; and all the books for my subscribers, and presents into the bargain.' Spence's *Anecdotes*.

P. 144, l. 1. *Lintot impressed*. Johnson does not quote any authority for this statement. But in all probability he would derive his knowledge of such proceedings from his father. Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 34. l. 24.

P. 145, l. 21. *in one of his letters*. This is the letter to Mr. Bridges, first printed by Johnson. See p. 241.

P. 146, l. 32. *Dacier*. This is the celebrated Madame Dacier (1651-1720), who, in 1716, published her 'Defence of Homer,' and in

the same year her translation of the *Odyssey*, which had already been preceded by a translation of the *Iliad*.

1. 34. *Eustathius*. A learned critic of the twelfth century, born at Constantinople. His 'Commentaries upon Homer' date from Rome in the year 1550, and consist chiefly of collections from older commentators.

P. 147, l. 2. *not to have been able*. Croker mentions a letter in his possession from Broome to Fenton (15th June, 1727), in which he says, 'All the crime that I have committed is saying that he is no master of Greek; and I am so confident of this, that if he can translate ten lines of Eustathius, I'll own myself unjust and unworthy.'

1. 7. *Broome*. William Broome (1689-1745) became afterwards the chief helper in the translation of the *Odyssey*, translating eight of the books and supplying all the notes. Broome published a volume of Miscellaneous Poems in 1727, and having justly complained of Pope's treatment of him, received a place in the *Dunciad*.

1. 9. *Fenton*. Elijah Fenton, author of the tragedy of *Mariamne*, another of Pope's assistants in the translation of the *Odyssey*.

1. 10. *preserved*. Pope having, according to his custom with letters, written part of his translation of Homer on the back of it.

1. 15. Jortin gives his own account of the whole affair thus:— 'The person employed by Mr. Pope was not at leisure to go on with the work, and Mr. Pope, by his bookseller, I suppose, sent to Jeffries, a bookseller at Cambridge, to find out a student who would undertake the task. Jeffries applied to Dr. Thirlby, who was my tutor, and who pitched upon me. I cannot recollect what Mr. Pope allowed for each book of Homer. I have a notion that it was three or four guineas. When I had gone through some books, I forgot how many, Mr. Jeffries let us know that Mr. Pope had a friend to do the rest. When that part of Homer came out in which I had been concerned, I was much pleased to find that he had not only used almost all my notes, but had hardly made any alteration in the expressions. I was in some hopes in those days, for I was young, that Mr. Pope would make enquiry about his coadjutor, and take some civil notice of him, but he did not, and I had no intention of obtruding myself upon him. I never saw his face.'

The mean indifference of thus neglecting a man to whose underpaid scholarship Pope had been so greatly indebted, was a kind of treatment which Johnson had perhaps learned, by hard experience, to look on as more usual than it really is, and to accept as too little worthy of remark or censure. Cf. Johnson's letter to Chesterfield, 'Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.'

1. 21. *very commendable*. Johnson again quotes from memory. The words are 'is commendable enough.' So in line 25, *order* should read *orders*.

P. 149, l. 2. *Mr. Craggs*. 'He told me, as a real friend, that a pension of three hundred pounds a year was at my service'; and that,

as he had the management of the secret-service money in his hands, he could pay me such a pension yearly, without any one's knowing that I had it. I declined even this: but thanked Mr. Craggs for the heartiness and sincerity of his friendship, told him that I did not much like a pension any way; but that since he had so much goodness toward me, if I should want money, I would come to him for a hundred pounds, or even for five hundred, if my wants ran so high.' Pope, in Spence's *Anecdotes*.

Pope being himself the only authority for this story, it must be received with great suspicion, as being very probably an invention on the part of the poet for the display of his own magnanimity.

1. 8. *who disdained.* Pope's independence in money matters found ready sympathy with Johnson, and perhaps even blinded him to some of the poet's graver faults of character.

P. 151, l. 33. *deserv'd.* The true MS. reading is *desir'd*, which, by some later editors, has been restored in the text without remark.

1. 38. *present.* The MS. has *presents*.

P. 156, l. 9. *Halifax.* This tale is derived from Spence's *Anecdotes*, and Spence himself confessed to being a little uncertain as to minute details.

1. 19. *little.* Spence has 'better.'

P. 157, l. 28. *The patron was not accustomed.* Johnson is doubtless thinking of those excessive flights of praise and fulsome flattery with which the poets of the generation immediately preceding that of Pope were accustomed to return the favours of a patron. At these Johnson's anger and disgust are always loudly expressed. Cf. the *Life of Dryden*; almost *passim*.

1. 32. *troublesome.* Johnson seems here to miss Pope's meaning. He could not have meant that he wanted benefits from Halifax before he began to thank him; or certainly he would not have said so even if such had been his real feeling. He is only in a delicate way saying that he wants nothing from Halifax at all; which he conveys by hinting that Halifax has already done something for him (as in granting him his acquaintance, and correcting the passage in question), so that if he is to write on their relationships, it will be to thank him, not to ask for more at his hands.

P. 158, l. 6. *scorn and hatred.* Language far too strong. Pope could not have admired Halifax, or he would not have exposed him to ridicule in the matter of the corrections to the *Homer*. But Pope bestowed posthumous praise on him in the preface to the *Iliad*, and the poet was not the man to do this to any object of his 'scorn and hatred.' And though we must allow that the character of *Bufo*, in the *Prologue to the Satires*, is probably intended for Halifax, yet it is not necessary to assign any particular hatred as the cause of even so severe a satire as this from the pen of Pope.

l. 30. *no hypocrisy*. How much of hypocrisy there really was in some at least of these proceedings has been shown above. Cf. the notes to p. 141.

P. 159, l. 22. *and seems . . . to me*. Johnson again quotes inaccurately. Pope wrote 'and has seemed to be no very just one to me.'

P. 160, l. 7. *About this time*. There seems to be no authority for this story, and the words 'it is likely' and 'if the reports be true' point to the conclusion that Johnson himself doubted it.

l. 31. *Tickell*. Both versions appeared in June 1715.

P. 161, l. 4. *high-flyers*. Pope wrote 'I shall fear no arbitrary, highflying proceedings from the small court faction at Button's.' Pope to Craggs, July 15th, 1715.

*Button's*. This was a coffee-house opposite Will's in Russell Street, Covent Garden. It was kept by one Daniel Button, an old servant of the Countess of Warwick, whom Addison helped to establish it. Addison made it his frequent resort, and of course drew to it much of the society of the wits of the day.

l. 7. *common friend*. Note that the vulgarism 'mutual friend' is not used by Johnson.

l. 10. *Both good*. This opinion was reported to Pope by Gay, in a letter of July 8, 1715. Gay seems to have acted very efficiently here in the character of a mischief-maker. He was one of those 'damned good-natured friends,' as Johnson used to call them, who always manage to say the wrong thing to the wrong man at the wrong time.

l. 25. *He was convinced*. There was no reason for this conviction on the part of Pope.

l. 30. *a crime perpetrated in vain*. Johnson's language here is most unnecessarily strong. He implies that he believes in Pope's theory of the real authorship of Tickell's translation—in itself a wild invention; and even if Addison had had a partial concern in the undertaking, it is difficult to see how the suppression of his name would amount to a 'crime.' On such a theory of literary morality Pope's own character would be criminal indeed.

P. 162, l. 17. *adjoined*. Pope wrote 'subjoined.'

l. 18. *satire on Addison*. This was first printed in 1723, then among the 'Miscellanies' in 1727, and finally incorporated, with some slight alterations, in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, ll. 192-214. 'These celebrated lines are at once a masterpiece of Pope's skill as a poet and his base disposition as a man. They unite the most exquisite finish of sarcastic expression with the venomous malignity of personal rancour.' Pope's Satires, Clar. Press Series, note.

l. 27. *house at Twickenham*. This house was destroyed in 1807. The present house preserves the name, but does not stand on the precise site of Pope's Villa.

P. 163, l. 8. *It may be frequently remarked*. Cf. Southey's Life of

Nelson: 'Good God! if I did not find that great little man, of whom everybody is so afraid, playing in the next room under the dining-table with Mrs. Nisbet's child.'

P. 164, l. 7. *Homerides*. Burnet and Ducket were joint authors of this pamphlet, of which two editions appeared in 1715.

l. 15. *South Sea*. This alludes to the celebrated Company for trading with the South Seas, afterwards known as the South Sea Bubble.

l. 22. *perhaps not wholly of that*. 'Pope has engaged to translate the *Odyssey* in three years; I believe rather out of a prospect of gain than inclination, for I am persuaded he bore his part in the loss of the South Sea' Gay to Swift, Jan. 24th, 1722.

l. 23. *Next year*. That is, 1721. But the real date was 1722.

l. 28. *same year*. This date should be 1725. The edition was in six volumes 4to., published by Tonson.

P. 165, l. 2. *sixteen shillings*. This piece of information Johnson doubtless derived from his father.

l. 7. *Shakspeare restored*. Published in 1726.

l. 8. *formal edition*. In 1733.

l. 26. *little read*. The so-called 'correct' style of the time had allowed the works of Shakspeare to fall into almost total neglect. The editor of Sheffield's *Essay on Poetry* said of Shakspeare in 1721, that there was not one of his soliloquies that could be excused by reason or nature.

l. 32. *Fenton and Broome*. 'They two [Fenton and Broome] had resolved on translating the *Odyssey*; Mr. Pope hearing of it immediately said that he would make a third. At last he came to be principal in the work.' Spence's *Anecdotes*.

P. 166, l. 8. *trial of Bishop Atterbury*. Bishop Atterbury was tried for conspiring to procure the restoration of the Pretender. He is said to have composed the speech in which Dr. Sacheverell defended himself in his own trial. Atterbury was convicted and banished the kingdom. Pope gives an account of and excuse for his own blunders at the trial. 'I never could speak in public: and I don't believe that if it was a set thing, I could give an account of any story to twelve friends together, though I could tell it to any three of them with a great deal of pleasure. When I was to appear for the Bishop of Rochester, in his trial, though I had but ten words to say, and that on a plain point, (how the Bishop spent his time whilst I was with him at Bromley,) I made two or three blunders in it: and that notwithstanding the first row of lords (which was all I could see) were mostly of my acquaintance.' Spence's *Anecdotes*.

l. 25. *Broome and Fenton*. Cf. p. 147, ll. 7-9, and notes.

P. 167, l. 16. 'In 1726, Mr. Joseph Spence, Fellow of New College in Oxford, but not yet Professor of Poetry, as Dr. Johnson imagined him to be (my father holding that office at the time), published an *Essay*

on the *Odyssey*, in a dialogue between Philypus and Antiphous, after the manner of Bruhours and Dryden on the Drama, in which its beauties and blemishes were minutely considered. The candour, the politeness, the true taste, and judgment, with which this criticism was conducted, were so very acceptable and pleasing to Pope that he immediately courted the acquaintance of the ingenious author, who, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's invidious assertion, was an excellent scholar.' Warton's edition of Pope, vol. i. p. xxxv.

1. 27. *compiled memorials*. This is the 'Spence's Anecdotes' frequently referred to. Johnson made great use of them in writing this life.

P. 168, l. 2. *his fingers*. There is here another of those rare instances in Johnson of a loosely constructed sentence. The loss of Pope's fingers is so mixed up in a maze of pronouns that it is left uncertain whether the lost fingers belonged to the poet or the postilion.

1. 4. *Voltaire*. At this time Voltaire was staying with Lord Bolingbroke. The letter alluded to is dated 'In my Lord Bolingbroke's house, Friday at noon, Nov. 16, 1726.' The tales told of Voltaire are taken from Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*, being contained in a foot-note to p. 213, ed. 1769. Such an authority is not sufficient to give them any claim to credence, more particularly as the 'trick' alluded to is given by Ruffhead himself on the authority only of Pope's own unsupported testimony. The story is that Voltaire tried to elicit from Pope the name of the writer of the first of those 'Occasional Letters' which appeared at that date addressed to Walpole, and which were producing much stir at court. Pope, on promise of secrecy, claimed the authorship for himself, and declared that by the next day the news was all over the court. Ruffhead must have been possessed of great believing power to accept such a story of Voltaire. But most of the contemporary writing about Voltaire is utterly untrustworthy, being composed under the influence of strong theological bias.

1. 13. *Burnet*. The allusion is to Burnet's 'History of his Own Time.'

1. 30. *same year*. This had really happened two years before. Letters published by Pope himself were all revised, and many garbled; and he was annoyed at a publication which precluded this exercise of his talents; that is, supposing his own account to be true, which is doubtful. Cf. p. 176, l. 30, and note.

1. 33. *Art of Sinking*. 'Mr. Pope has published a second volume of his Poetical Works [1735] . . . I always thought the "Art of Sinking" was his, though he there disowns it.' Ben Motte (the publisher) to Swift, 31st July, 1735.

P. 169, l. 10. *Theobald*. Cf. p. 165, l. 6.

1. 14. *Ralph*.

'And see, thy very Gazetteers give o'er,  
Even Ralph repents, and Henley writes no more.'

Dunciad, i. 215.

‘Silence, ye Wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,  
And makes night hideous—answer him, ye owls!’

Ibid, iii. 165.

These ‘Gazetteers’ were men who received in those days pay from the government out of the secret service money, to write in their support, and abuse their opponents, which last they certainly did most lustily. James Ralph appears to have been one of them. ‘James Ralph, a name inserted after the first editions, not known to our author till he writ a swearing-piece called Sawney, very abusive of Dr. Swift, Mr. Gay, and himself. These lines allude to a thing of his, entitled “Night, a Poem.”’ Note by Warburton, on Dunciad, iii. 165.

P. 170, l. 17. *at random*. This is simply a falsehood. There was no difficulty in recognising the initials. Cf. p. 172, l. 16.

P. 173, l. 3. *remarks*. Cf. pp. 139 and 141, l. 7, note, *sub fin.*

l. 16. *sneak and shuffle*. Johnson’s indignation here at last, and most properly, gets the better of his admiration for Pope.

P. 174, l. 8. *denied*. In a letter to the Earl of Burlington, bearing no date beyond 1731.

l. 20. *less easily excused*. Spence makes Pope declare that the Duke of Chandos was perfectly satisfied.

P. 175, l. 1. *Gay*. John Gay (1688–1732) is perhaps best known as the author of Gay’s Fables. He had always been intimate with Pope and Swift, the latter of whom recommended to him the scheme of his ‘Beggar’s Opera,’ which was performed with so much success as to bring him £700 of profits, and which was the foundation of the English Opera.

l. 23. *from noblemen*. Johnson is here mistaken. The volume does not contain any letters from noblemen, and Cull was acquitted and had the copies returned to him on that ground.

P. 176, l. 30. *publish them himself*. This account of the matter is now universally received.

P. 177, l. 15. *Preface to the Miscellanies*. Cf. p. 168, l. 17, sq.

P. 179, l. 5. *his friend*. Lord Bolingbroke.

l. 24. 1733. Should be 1732.

P. 180, l. 24. *received from Bolingbroke*. Cf. the Introduction to the Essay on Man, Clar. Press Series.

P. 182, l. 31. *A letter*. This was first printed in Malone’s ‘Supplement to Shakespeare.’

P. 183, l. 8. *The arrogance . . . importance*. Johnson here takes an eminently common-sense view of the question of consistency. A *perfect* consistency is possible only to the narrowest mind and the feeblest understanding.

‘A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with

his shadow on the wall. Out upon your guarded lips! Sew them up with packthread, do. Else, if you would be a man, speak what you think to-day in words as hard as cannon-balls, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day. Ah, then, exclaim the aged ladies, you shall be sure to be misunderstood.' R. W. Emerson, *Self-Reliance*.

1. 28. *March 24, 1743.* This date is quite erroneous. It should be April 11, 1739.

P. 184, l. 25. *It is known, &c.* This story is narrated on the sole authority of Ruffhead.

P. 185, l. 19. *among the great.* 'Envy must own I live among the great.' Pope, *Imitations of Horace*, i. 133.

l. 24. *solicit and obtain.* Not exactly so. Southcot had made himself obnoxious to the court by intrigues with the Pretender, and when the vacancy occurred, he wrote to Pope that he could be chosen if it were not for the opposition of the English government. At Pope's intercession the opposition was withdrawn. See Warburton's note on l. 29 of the *Epilogue to the Satires*.

P. 186, l. 10. 1733. Should be 1732.

P. 187, l. 1. *burning the Pope.* This Epistle to Lord Bathurst is known as No. 3 of the 'Moral Essays.'

'To town he comes, completes the nation's hope,  
And heads the bold Train-bands, and burns the Pope.'

1. 3. *monument.* Moral Essays, iii. 213.

'Where London's column, pointing at the skies,  
Like a tall bully, lifts the head, and lies.' Ibid. 339.

The inscription stated that the fire of London was the work of the Catholics; it has long been removed from the Monument.

l. 9. 1734. Should be 1733.

P. 188, l. 7. *This doctrine.* Johnson knew well that any such tendency as Pope here describes under the name of 'ruling passion' could be resisted. This was a task which he himself had had to encounter in regard to his frequent fits of melancholy.

l. 22. *commentator.* Warburton, in a note at the commencement of the 'Characters of Women,' which is the second of the 'Moral Essays.'

l. 27. *in a note.* Not in a note, but in the text, and that not of the 'Characters of Women' at all.

'In this impartial glass my Muse intends  
Fair to expose myself, my foes, my friends;  
Publish the present age; but where my text  
Is vice too high, reserve it for the next.'

Imitations of Horace, *Satires* ii. 1. 57.

l. 32. *Atossa.* Wife of Darius, king of Persia. She is mentioned by Herodotus, who narrates that she was the first, at the instigation of Demokedes, to propose to Darius the invasion of Greece.

This was at a time when the Greek states could hardly have resisted such an attack, and Herodotus argues that it was only the refusal of Darius at once to comply with the advice of Atossa, and his preference for the Scythian expedition, which saved Greece from falling under the Persian yoke. Cf. Herodotus, iii. 133, 134.

l. 33. *gratitude*. Johnson's censure is here undeserved. The character of Atossa is intended not for the Duchess of Marlborough but for the Duchess of Buckinghamshire.

l. 34. 1730 and 1740. Really between 1733 and 1738.

P. 189, l. 2. *once without it*. Johnson alludes to the 'Sober Advice from Horace to the Young Gentlemen about Town.' Pope reprinted this as his in the edition of the 'Imitations,' 1740.

l. 27 The epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, as has been already noticed, is also known as the Prologue to the Satires.

P. 190, l. 23. *He was .... malignity*. This paragraph is a good instance of that obscurity which will sometimes result from the great familiarity of the writer with his subject-matter. Johnson has constructed the passage as if all his readers knew as much as himself of the history, personal and political, of Pope's time. John, Lord Hervey of Ickworth (1696-1743), was a strenuous supporter of the Walpole administration. His health in his youth had been extremely delicate, and the strict regimen necessary to preserve him was used by Pope as an opportunity for satire. Hervey wrote many pamphlets in defence of the Ministry; but the one which was answered by Pulteney and caused the quarrel was wrongly attributed to him, being really written by Sir William Yonge, then Secretary at War. Pope first attacked Hervey in the Miscellanies (1727), and towards the close of 1732 he was again sneered at in the Imitations of Horace, Satires ii. 1, under the title of Lord Fanny. Hervey answered this with the assistance of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, on whom Pope, in the same composition, had made the most foul and brutal attack in all our literature. There was also another answer, 1733, wholly from Hervey's pen, 'An Epistle from a Nobleman to a Doctor of Divinity,' and it is in *this* that the *hatter* accusation is contained. In answer Pope again satirised Hervey in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot under the title of Sporus. These are 'the verses in this poem.' Cf. note on the Epistle to Arbuthnot, l. 305, Clar. Press Series.

l. 28. *Hard as, &c.* This was written with the assistance of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to whom indeed it has been frequently attributed altogether.

l. 29. *hints, &c.* This was in a different piece, wholly by Hervey, called 'An Epistle in Verse from a Nobleman to a Doctor in Divinity.'

P. 191, l. 12. *Allen of Bath*. This is Mr. Ralph Allen, who introduced into the postal system of the country the system of cross posts, obviating the inconvenience, which had obtained till his time, that a letter

from one provincial town to another had always to be sent through London. He was much respected by the authors of his time, and supplied Fielding with the original of his beautiful character of Squire Allworthy, in 'Tom Jones.'

1. 20. *Reproaching.* 'Lyttelton supported his friend, and replied that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of so great a poet.' Johnson, *Life of Lyttelton*.

1. 30. *to intimidate Pope.* 'His prosecution was intended as a hint to Pope, and he understood it as such; and did not publish a *Third Dialogue*, which he certainly had designed to do.' Warton's *Pope* (1797), vol. i. p. lxi. This 'third dialogue' was one intended to be added to the two already published, called 'Seventeen Hundred and Thirty Eight.'

P. 192, l. 8. *about this time.* These 'Memoirs' were first published in 1741, in an edition of Pope's prose works.

1. 31. *Mr. Oufle.* 'L'Histoire des Imaginations Extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle, causées par la lecture des Livres qui traitent de la Magie, du Grimoire, des Démoniaques, &c.' Two vols., Amsterdam, 1710. Or Johnson may have seen the English translation of 1711.

P. 193, l. 10. *a man.* This was by Atterbury, afterwards bishop of Rochester. Pope not improbably was in the secret of the editorship; if so, the omission of his predecessor's preface was peculiarly 'injurious.'

P. 194, l. 33. *looking on.* We should now say 'looking on at.'

P. 195, l. 6. *Three Hours after Marriage.* This play was by John Gay, Pope's friend, who has been previously mentioned. Cf. p. 175, l. 1, and note.

P. 196, l. 5. *he would rise.* That is, Cibber would rise. The pronouns are a little confused.

1. 22. *Osborne.* This was the bookseller whom Johnson immortalised by knocking him down with a folio. Cf. Boswell, anno 1742.

1. 27. *fate of Cassandra.* Cassandra, also called Alexandra, was the fairest of the daughters of Priam and Hekabe. She was beloved by Apollo, who promised her the gift of prophecy if she would accept of his love. She consented, but having obtained the gift she refused to keep her promise. To punish her Apollo decreed that though she should correctly prophesy, no one should believe her. This was therefore her fate, and she in vain prophesied the fall of Troy.

P. 197, l. 4. *his own magpie.*

'The coxcomb bird, so talkative and grave,  
That from his cage cries Cuckold, . . . , and Knave,  
Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,  
You hold him no Philosopher at all.' *Moral Essays*, i. 5.

1. 7. *another pamphlet.* 'Another Occasional Letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope. Wherein the New Hero's preferment to his Throne in the Dunciad seems not to be accepted. And the Author of that Poem his

more rightful claim to it is asserted. With an Expostulatory Address to the Revend. Mr. W—n, author of the new Preface, and Adviser in the curious Improvements of that Satire.' 1744.

l. 30. *Blank verse.* Johnson's love of rhymed verses is here again apparent. Cf. Life of Dryden, p. 6, l. 28, and note.

P. 198, l. 16. *Martha Blount.* Theresa and Martha Blount were the two daughters of Lister Blount, Esq., of Maple Durham, in Oxfordshire. Theresa was of the same age as Pope, Martha two years younger. They were the Stella and Vanessa of Pope's poetry.

P. 199, l. 10. *Bolingbroke.* These accounts of the last hours of Pope are almost all taken from Spence's Anecdotes.

P. 200, l. 1. *his father.* The father was buried at Chiswick, but there is a monument in Twickenham Church erected by Pope to his father and mother 'et sibi.' It was this monument, probably, that misled Johnson.

l. 11. *reserved for the next age.* Cf. p. 88, l. 27, note.

P. 201, l. 19. *zeal for Bolingbroke.* This seems to have been the true explanation of the matter.

P. 202, l. 4. *polluted.* Cunningham notices that this is a favourite word with Johnson. In the Life of Cowley, 'whatever he writes is polluted with some conceit'; in the 'Idler,' No. 82, he talks of polluting a canvas with deformity; in his 'Tour to the Hebrides,' of polluting the table with slices of cheese. Pope 'polluted his will with female resentment,' and in his own will Johnson bequeaths a soul to God, 'polluted with many sins.'

*Female resentment.* Johnson follows Warburton and Ruffhead. 'I never read his will; but he mentioned to me the part relating to Mr. Allen, and I advised him to omit it, but could not prevail on him to do so. I have a letter of his by me on that subject.' Martha Blount, in Spence's Anecdotes.

l. 5. *gave to the Hospital.* By Pope's own request, who desired him thus to dispose of it if he did not wish to accept it for himself.

l. 25. *petty peculiarities.* There is an account of him in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1775, p. 435, from which Johnson seems to have borrowed largely.

P. 204, l. 14. *a dram.* The same tale is found in Dr. King's 'Anecdotes,' pp. 12, 13. Dr. King himself recommended Lord Burlington to supply Pope with cherry brandy, at which Pope was angry, but drank the brandy whilst the company were engaged in conversation.

l. 18. *says Juvenal:—*

'Finem animae, quae res humanas miscuit olim,  
Non gladii, non saxa dabunt, nec tela, sed ille  
Cannarum vindex ac tanti sanguinis ultor  
Annulus.'

P. 205, l. 5. *impression* = printing.

l. 11. *resembled Dryden*. Cf. Life of Dryden, p. 51, l. 15.

l. 19. *Patrick*. This was Samuel Patrick, compiler of a Greek Lexicon, a Latin Lexicon, and a *Clavis Homerica*.

l. 20. *he would allow*. Warton's Pope, 1797, vol. vi. p. 112.

l. 28. *The table . . . house*. Lady Bute, daughter of Lady Mary Wortley, used to say that she was certain they never in their lives met at Lord Oxford's table.

*Infested*. Here used in its strict sense, *harassed, disturbed*.

P. 206, l. 15. *a heart for all, &c.* Pope to Swift, March 23, 1737.

l. 34. *The Mint*. There is much history of London involved in this casual mention by Johnson of the Mint. It was originally built by Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, in the reign of Henry VIII; it was forfeited to the crown, and was afterwards used for coining, whence the name, which extended to the whole neighbourhood. The neighbourhood became a sanctuary for debtors and persons of yet worse fame, from which fact it derived its evil reputation, and the allusions to it made by Pope:—

‘Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,  
Happy! to catch me just at dinner time.’

Prologue to the Satires, 13.

*Want of a dinner*. Johnson's notice of this is manly and courageous. It must be remembered that he himself had been forced to sign a letter *tuus impransus*.

P. 207, l. 13. *in the advance of life*. ‘Pope courted with the utmost assiduity all the old men from whom he could hope a legacy. . . . His general preaching against money was meant to induce people to throw it away that he might pick it up.’

P. 210, l. 4. *How he could love*. ‘Oh! a story of Mr. Pope and the Prince. “Mr. Pope, you don't love princes?” “Sir, I beg your pardon.” “Well, you don't love kings then?” “Sir, I own I love the lion best before his claws are grown.”’ Walpole to Mann, Sept. 13, 1741.

l. 19. *a fool to Fame*.

‘A fool to Pleasure, yet a slave to Fame.’

Pope, Moral Essays, ii. 62.

P. 212, l. 6. *first made ridiculous*. By the comparison between Pope and Philips in the Spectator. Cf. p. 141, l. 20.

l. 30. *His violation*. Johnson is not consistent in his account of this matter. Cf. p. 205, l. 5: ‘His unjustifiable impression,’ &c.

P. 213, l. 5. *Earl of Marchmont*. An interview between Johnson and the Earl of Marchmont was brought about by Boswell. See Life, 1778 and 1779.

l. 33. *academy of Paracelsus*. Paracelsus, who flourished in the early part of the 16th century, was a curious example of a man who united

quackery and ignorance with great mental power, boldness, and success. His father brought him up to medicine, but he despised book-learning of every sort, and took many long and hazardous journeys to investigate the secrets of Nature for himself. He used to boast that his whole library would not amount to six folios. Hence he who reads little, and is content to gather wisdom by his own practical experience, is said by Johnson to study in the academy of Paracelsus.

P. 214, l. 14. *verses to Jervas* :—

‘What flatt’ring scenes our wand’ring fancy wrought,  
Rome’s pompous glories rising to our thought !  
Together o’er the Alps methinks we fly,  
Fir’d with Ideas of fair Italy.  
With thee on Raphael’s Monument I mourn,  
Or wait inspiring dreams at Maro’s Urn.  
With thee repose, where Tully once was laid,  
Or seek some ruin’s formidable shade :  
While Fancy brings the vanished piles to view,  
And builds imaginary Rome anew.’ Epistle to Jervas, 23.

P. 215, l. 27. *Some employ at once, &c.* This was Johnson’s own practice.

P. 216, l. 13. *ready at his call.* Pope says in his preface to the *Essay on Man* that he found he could express himself more clearly and shortly in verse than in prose.

l. 21. *temporary.* Here used in the same sense as ‘occasional’ in the *Life of Dryden*, p. 71, l. 14, which see, with note.

l. 27. *what multitudes have said.* Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 71, l. 27.  
‘We have been all born, we have most of us been married,’ &c.

P. 217, l. 4. *of more importance.* This remark is very valuable from its truth, and as coming from an authority like Johnson. None can know the defects of a thing so well as the man that made it; provided always that he does not allow himself to be blinded by his own conceit.

l. 18. *for the people.* ‘I knew they were bad enough to please even when I wrote them.’ *Life of Dryden*, p. 103, l. 25.

P. 220, l. 20. *the Zephyrs.*

‘The balmy Zephyrs, silent since her death,  
Lament the ceasing of a sweeter breath.’

*Pastorals*, iv. 49.

l. 32. *Cooper’s Hill.* Sir John Denham’s ‘Cooper’s Hill,’ published at Oxford, 1633, describes the scenery of a part of the Thames near Windsor, and overlooking the famous lowlands of Runnymead. The poem is important as being the first example of that local poetry which seems almost confined to English literature, and which was afterwards to receive such exquisite development in Gray’s ‘Elegy in a Country Churchyard.’

P. 221, l. 11-22. *But the desire . . . tyrant.* Johnson has again ex-

pressed the same opinion in his life of Gray:—‘The “Prospect of Eton College” suggests nothing to Gray which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His supplication to Father Thames to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball is useless and puerile. Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself.’ But though Johnson criticises these passages in other writers, yet similar expressions may be found in his own works. Cf. Rasselas, p. 319, l. 28 sq. And the paragraph contains worse faults than any mere inconsistency. To censure a poet on such grounds as that ‘nothing can be easier than to tell’ a tale embodied in such charming verse as Pope’s legend of Lodona, is to fundamentally mistake the grounds of poetical criticism. Of this mistake Johnson has given a foretaste in the Life of Dryden, p. 8, ll. 9 sq. The truth is, that difficulty of subject is rather undesirable in poetry, and when present it is for the poet’s art to conceal it beneath the perfect flow of polished verse. He can never be more than a second-rate musician whose hearers are always wondering at his execution: intricacies vanish beneath a master’s touch, and every hearer is tempted to fancy that he can himself rival a brilliancy achieved with so much ease.

1. 14. *Father Thames.* Windsor Forest, l. 329 sq.:—

‘In that blest moment from his oozy bed,  
Old Father Thames advanc’d his rev’rend head,’ &c.

1. 15. *Lodona.* Windsor Forest, l. 171. In this episode Pope very beautifully narrates the legend of the origin of the river Loddon.

*Campaign.* The lines are—

‘Gods may descend in factions from the skies,  
And rivers from their oozy beds arise.’

1. 20. *a new metamorphosis.*

‘She said, and melting as in tears she lay,  
In a soft, silver stream dissolv’d away.  
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,  
For ever murmurs and for ever weeps;  
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,  
And bathes the forest where she ranged before.’

Windsor Forest, 203.

1. 25. *Chaucer.* The Temple of Fame is adapted from Chaucer’s House of Fame.

1. 30. *concluding paragraph.* From the concluding paragraph alluded to are the following lines:—

‘Nor Fame I slight, nor for her favours call,  
She comes unlook’d for if she comes at all,  
But if the purchase cost so dear a price,  
As soothing Folly, or exalting Vice:  
Oh! if the muse must flatter lawless sway,  
And follow still where fortune leads the way;

Or if no basis bear my rising name  
 But the fall'n ruins of another's fame;  
 Then teach me, heav'n! to scorn the guilty bays,  
 Drive from my breast that wretched lust of praise;  
 Unblemish'd let me live, or die unknown;  
 Oh! grant an honest fame, or grant me none.'

P. 223, l. 2. *Bentley*. Richard Bentley (1662-1742), a great classical scholar, who distinguished himself by his critical learning and by his conduct as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which capacity he was involved in constant broils with the University. The story in the text is one of many good tales of his ready and sarcastic wit.

l. 27. *Ignorant of its proceedings*. Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 86, l. 20, note.

P. 224, l. 9. *comparison*. *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 215-232. Johnson and Warton were quite opposed to each other in their critiques of this passage.

l. 28. *Apollo . . . Daphne*.

‘Nympha, precor, Penei, mane; non insequor hostis.  
 Nympha, mane. Sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem,  
 Sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae;  
 Hostes quaeque suos. Amor est mihi causa sequendi.’

Ovid, *Metamor.* i. 503.

‘Ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo  
 Vedit, et hic praedam pedibus petit, ille salutem;  
 Alter inhaesuro similis, jam jamque tenere  
 Sperat, et extento stringit vestigia rostro:  
 Alter in ambiguo est, an sit deprensus, et ipsis  
 Morsibus eripitur, tangentiaque ora relinquit:

Sic Deus, et virgo est; hic spe celer, illa timore.’ Ibid. 533.

In the above passages there are several of those comparisons of which Johnson complains as throwing no new light upon the subject.

P. 225, l. 33. *With many*. *Odyssey* xi. 733. The second line quoted should be ‘Up the high hill,’ &c. The translation of this book was the work of Broome. The reference in the Greek is *Odyssey* xi. 592.

P. 226, l. 1. *resulting*. Result = fly back. Fr. *resulter*, Lat. *salio, saltum*.

l. 15. *When Ajax*. The full quotation is—

‘When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
 The line too labours and the words move slow.’

*Essay on Criticism*, 370.

l. 30. *Beauties of this kind*. Johnson does not deny that these beauties are sometimes real, an opinion in which Pope has the support of Addison. See *Spectator*, No. 253. It is a question which depends largely on the delicacy and training of the ear. If Pope's meaning was that lines could be written, in reading which the ear would urge the

voice to more rapid articulation, he stated an ascertainable fact, which no amount of counting of syllables will explain away. Instances could be multiplied without end, but perhaps few would be better than Tennyson's lines in *Elaine* :—

‘Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;  
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.’

To read the second of these lines slowly would be to make it horribly harsh. The ear compels the voice to assume something of the rush and hurry of that desperate charge; for life, nay more, for Lancelot.

P. 227, l. 28. *If this is not sufficient . . .* ‘Originality consists in thinking for yourself, not in thinking differently from other people.’ Fitz-James Stephen, ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.’

P. 229, l. 9. *The Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard.* The full history of Eloisa and Abelard may be read in Elwin's edition of Pope's Works, vol. ii. p. 226. The two principal personages of the poem flourished in the twelfth century. It is enough to say of them here that both were learned and for learning famous, and deeply attached to each other. Circumstances parted them, and they retired to separate convents. A letter from Abelard to a friend, bewailing his hard fate in this matter, fell into the hands of Eloisa, who then, according to the tradition, wrote the Latin letter on which the poem is founded, but of the genuineness of which there is much doubt.

l. 32. *author of the Essay.* Joseph Warton.

P. 230, l. 31. *versions of Dryden.* That is, from Dryden's *Virgil*.

P. 232, l. 17. *to have added, &c.* This does not seem to be Johnson's opinion as expressed in the *Life of Dryden*. Cf. p. 70, l. 14: ‘A translator is to be like his author: it is not his business to excel him.’

P. 233, l. 12. *Broome.* Pope probably corrected these notes very freely. Cf. p. 166, l. 24, and p. 167, l. 2.

l. 22. *Theobald.* Cf. *supra*, p. 165, l. 6, and 169, l. 10.

P. 234, l. 19. *last collection.* This is Warton's edition of Pope.

l. 32. *Leibnitian reasoning.* The allusion is to the ‘*Essais de Théodicée*,’ published in 1710, and from which much of the argument of the *Essay on Man* is drawn.

P. 235, l. 13. *Though we are fools.* This is a constantly recurring thought in the ‘*Essay on Man*.’ Cf.

‘Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule—

Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!’ Part ii. l. 29.

But the actual quotation, though inaccurate, as Johnson's quotations usually are, is doubtless taken from the lines—

‘See! and confess, one comfort still must rise;

‘Tis this, Tho' man's a fool, yet God is wise.’

Part ii. l. 293.

P. 236, l. 33. *Atossa.* Cf. p. 188, l. 32, and note.

l. 34. *Clodio*. Altered to Wharton, the real name, in all the later editions. See *Moral Essays*, i. 179.

P. 237, l. 2. *Philomede*.

'As Helluo, late Dictator of the Feast,  
The nose of Hautgout and the Tip of Taste,  
Critiqu'd your wine, and analyz'd your meat,  
Yet on plain Pudding deigned at home to eat;  
So Philomedé lecturing all mankind  
On the soft passion and the taste refin'd,  
The address, the delicacy—stoops at once,  
And makes her hearty meal upon a dunce.'

*Moral Essays*, ii. 79.

'Tradition represents him as willing to descend from the dignity of the poet and statesman to the low delights of mean company.' Johnson's *Life of Prior*.

l. 8. *Elegy on Good Sense*. *Moral Essays*, iv. 41 sq.

l. 9. *End of Buckingham*. *Moral Essays*, iii. 299 sq.

l. 11. *arbitrarily called*. This title was given to it by Warburton.

l. 19. *Sporus*. Johnson's opinion of this passage is probably influenced by his fondness for the Herveys, Lord Hervey being the original of Pope's 'Sporus.' Cf. note on p. 190, l. 23.

P. 238, l. 7. *Pope had . . .* This paragraph is worthy of note as containing Johnson's full description of what the word 'genius' meant to him.

l. 26. *Music*. Johnson was unable to see how unsatisfactory was this definition of music.

l. 33. *cant.* Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 31, l. 27, note.

P. 239, l. 14. *Swift's edict*. Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 106, l. 34, and note.

l. 16. *Fenton*. Cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 107, l. 30.

l. 18. *double rhymes*. There does not appear to be in the 'Rape of the Lock' any double rhyme which is not common in other portions of Pope's writings; and it is hard to see on what ground Johnson would have pronounced 'unsuccessful' the rhyme in the lines—

'But clear thy wrinkled brow and quit thy sorrow,  
I'd scorn your prentice should you die to-morrow.'

*Wife of Bath*, l. 124.

l. 22. *six first*. Instead of 'first six.'

P. 243, l. 1. *Visitor*. This was in 'The Universal Visitor' for 1756. There is also another 'Essay on Epitaphs' by Johnson in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1740.

P. 245, l. 21. *Trumbal*. Cf. note on p. 129, l. 28.

P. 248, l. 34. *nameless*. Nameless when this was written. But cf. *Life of Dryden*, p. 48, l. 17.

P. 251, l. 29. *from Dryden*.

P. 253, l. 26. *from Crashaw.*

'The modest front of this small floor,  
Believe me, reader, can say more  
Than many a braver marble can,  
"Here lies a truly honest man."

Crashaw's Epitaph upon Mr. Ashton.

P. 256, l. 30. *six last.* Another instance of Johnson's habit of putting the numeral in the wrong place in the sentence.

THE END.





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